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# The American RECORD GUIDE

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# The American RECORD GUIDE



JAN. 1951 • Vol. XVII, No. 5

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## Editorial Notes

**I**T WAS our intention this month to discuss in detail the reconversion of 78 rpm equipment to LP to the interests of many new and old readers, and also to give a short recapitulation of the best releases of 1950. This has been prevented by the large amount of new releases that have come our way, and the need to catch up on extra work that has piled up during the holidays. Two deaths in December and January, one in your editor's family and one in Mr. Archetti's, have usurped time and brought heartaches. Mr. Archetti could not complete his reviews for the December issue.

Of late, there have been an amazing number of old readers, who had previously dropped their subscriptions in the past year and a half, who have returned to the fold. Almost all have asked for advice on reconversion of their 78 machines into a unit that will play three speeds, or only 78s and LPs. To do justice to this influx of correspondence, we feel it best to outline our recommendations in a short article in our next issue, and as our chief technical advisers are tied-up at present, we can only touch on the subject here. Do not underestimate the 45s; most people will want all three speeds in the long run, even though LP should serve the main interests of most as time goes on. One of the best changer mechanisms on the market is the new Garrard 3-way unit; it handles all records competently, and can be installed in place of your present changer. In the reproduction of 45s and LPs, we prefer magnetic pickup cartridges — the Pickering or the G.E. Most will find that their 78s also sound better with the magnetic head rather than the old crystal. Types of equipment have to be taken into consideration, and this will be discussed in our next issue, as record compensation — which is recommended — may not be feasible to install in some machines of the past.

## *Tape Versus Discs*

Philip Miller tells some interesting stories about the activities of the Music Teachers' National Association meetings, held in late December at the Shoreham Hotel in Washington, one of which is of interest to our readers. Mr. Miller was Chairman of the Committee of the Audio Visual Session, the meetings of which took place on December 27. The value of tape over records, and visa versa, was one of the subjects of interest to many who came to the lectures. Apparently, some people are of the firm opinion that tape has replaced recordings and that one should re-record one's favorite recordings onto tape. The fallibility of this premise was stressed by Mr. C. J. LeBel, vice-president of Audio Devices, Inc., in his lecture. His advice to such thinkers, Mr. Miller tells us, was — if you are planning to keep recordings for permanent storage it is better to have them on discs than tape, as the latter deteriorates. If you make tape recordings from the air or elsewhere, Mr. LeBel stated, "you had better transfer them to discs if you want to preserve them" Modern acetate recordings, if played with a pickup cartridge, kept for their sole use, do not deteriorate as quickly as tape.

### *Mr. Snyder Comes Through*

In reporting on the Audio Engineering Society in our November issue, we remarked about the refusal of Mr. Ross H. Snyder of San Francisco, Consultant of Consumers Research, Inc., to answer a question. It is a pleasure to print Mr. Snyder's letter, which we received during the holidays, explaining things, and also some facts about modern recordings and reproduction. He writes:

"I think that I have not been called an ill-tempered bear in print, or so gently, before by anyone. But as, if I'm to judge by remarks of my friends, there's some truth in the charge, perhaps it were best I own to it, and offer this as amends.

"I remember the incident to which you referred very clearly, as it was a matter of some concern to me at the time. You see, I had spent the better part of my flight East the previous night extending upon some aspects of my paper, because I had received last minute notice that Mr. Pickering was ill, and would not attend. To our good fortune, he made it, but his appearance caused me to

have less time, after the paper was read, for questions. You can imagine my feelings when one of your group asked a question to which I would have loved to have devoted many minutes, but the chairman had just significantly glanced at his watch. The result was what seemed to be curtness, but was actually frustration, and in no sense annoyance. My recollection is that I paused to try for a quick reply, decided the question rated much more and felt forced to dismiss it with the remark that the question was too large to take up at this time. I'm very glad that the questioner has at last been identified, so that he might receive some more satisfactory reply, even if delayed. [See page 75 of our November 1950 issue for comments on Mr. Snyder's interesting talk on the advisability of a more restricted range for FM and AM radio reproduction.]

"It appears that I have been typed as an apologist for the much maligned manufacturers' low fidelity ideas. Nothing could have been further from my intentions: the central theme of the paper was that wide range is desirable, but only in the presence of very low noise and distortion, and great smoothness of frequency response. My contention is that transmissions, on record or by radio, which are available to us are not tolerable if reproduced with full range, for that simply reveals the hums and rumbles in the bass and the hash in the extreme treble. Furthermore, I would assert, we must not mistake the claim for the fact in loudspeaker performance: only laboratory equipment gives smooth response up into the last octave of audio spectrum, and no speaker I know can get smoothly and with adequate power-handling capability down into the lowest octave. If a sufficiently quiet and undistorted transmission were available, it would not be appropriate to feed it into a speaker system which would make mush of the extreme bottom, and again hash of the top. So I recommend cutting off both at a level which will permit the equipment we have to work satisfactorily.

"All of these considerations apply to the reproduction of fine records. There are very few which have significant musical components up to 12 or 14 kilocycles, and fewer still in which these are not masked by noise. The use of laboratory equipment is, perhaps, justified by these few, but I think it inadvis-

(Continued on page 156)



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Record Guide



Gemma Bellicioni  
in her prime.

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## THE SINGERS TOLL--1951

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By Leo Reimans

**L**OOKING back on the year 1950 and the several deaths of famous singers of the past, it seems to me the greatest loss was the death of the noted Italian baritone, Giuseppe De Luca, on August 27th. Still, his death was less shocking than the loss of Maria Cebotari and Ginette Neveu, the violinist, who were both in the prime of life. The death of De Luca was unexpected, especially as he had recorded only a short while before a number of arias on an LP disc for Continental and had extensive plans for the coming year. Though De Luca was well past his three score years and ten, he still retained his vocal powers to a certain extent and certainly his well deserved popularity when most of his contemporaries were forgotten except by a few highly specialized collectors. He leaves a rich legacy of recordings, among which his contributions of the past few years are not by any means the least interesting. It would be superfluous to add anything to the many eulogistic obituaries he received, but I would like to say no other baritone except Battistini was ever so close in my affection, and of the

two — in my estimation — De Luca was by far the greater artist.

In sharp contrast to the publicity De Luca's death received was the furtive, lonely and unpublishized death of Gertrude Foerstel, who died in her 70th year on June 7th, in a home for aged people near Bonn. They call it a Spital, which is not quite a hospital and not quite a true home for the aged, but something in between. She had lived there since the war's end when she was bombed out of Cologne where she had been a professor at the conservatory. Her name may be meaningless to American collectors, but not to elder generations in Germany, Austria, and Holland. Her popularity there can only be compared to Elisabeth Schumann's in England. Originally a coloratura soprano, she started her career in Prague and later joined the Vienna opera near the close of Mahler's directorship. There she sang the first Viennese Sophie in *Der Rosenkavalier*. She was regarded as the finest Madama Butterfly the Viennese ever heard or saw. At the height of her fame she left the opera to specialize in

concert singing. It is as a lieder singer that she is best remembered in Holland.

Mahler was extremely fond of Foerstel's voice, and no one has ever remotely approached her singing of the *Himmlische Freude* from his *Fourth Symphony*. There was a peculiarly sunny quality in the timbre of her voice, as if she were mentally projecting a smile of happiness. This sunny quality was never cloying, never saccharine or arch, like some singers of her type. During the great Mahler Festival of Amsterdam in 1920, directed by Mengelberg, she was the most outstanding of the soloists. Unfortunately, her records are rare and practically unknown to most Americans. She made a series of G&Ts while still in Prague (some of which were later issued on green Zonophones). These are good enough, but rather backwardly recorded, and made at too early a point in her career. After a period of 20 years, she made three acoustic records for Polydor around 1924. These alone capture some of her unusual personality, and they deserve to be considered among the great Lieder recordings. Her rendition of Schubert's *Hirt auf dem Felsen* as compared with the indifferent and badly reproduced one of Lotte Schöne (which also suffers from its orchestral accompaniment), the rather oversweet version by Elisabeth Schumann, the technically far from impeccable rendition of Dorothy Maynor, or the musically correct yet not completely satisfying version of Margaret Ritchie were nevertheless, in my estimation, rates second best to Foerstel's, is a jewel. The only other singer who had the same quality of sunlight in her voice was Maria Ivogun. On second thought, I would say perhaps Claire Dux evidenced this ingratiating quality on occasion. It would be interesting to know whether Foerstel had any notable pupils. It seems strange that one gifted with a rare quality of voice should have died lonely, forgotten and destitute, a victim of the war.

### Edyth Walker

The first notable celebrity to die in 1950 was Edyth Walker, this was on February 19th in New York. Her fame was immeasurably greater in Europe than it was in her own country. She was born in Hopewell, N. Y. on March 27, 1870, and "she was one of the natural musicians who rise out of unmusical surroundings" (Oscar Thompson). She sang in a Hopewell church as early as 14. Some

years later with a loan of \$1,000 from a friendly physician, she went to Dresden and studied with Aglaia Orgeni. To acquire more funds she gave lessons in singing and in English. "On the suggestion of a friend," Thompson tells us, "she wrote to the late W. K. Vanderbilt, who was then in Vienna, and inclosed credentials from her teacher, asked for a loan." He had his secretary send her \$1,000.

She made her debut at the Metropolitan on November 30, 1903 as Amneris in *Aida*, with such distinguished associates as Gadski, Caruso, Scotti and Plancon. Before she sang at the Metropolitan as a mezzo-soprano, she already had behind her a career in Vienna and had made her early G&T records, which are now choice items. Emperor Franz-Josef was so impressed with her artistry that he created her a Kammersängerin. Many of her contralto roles were coached with the famous Marianne Brandt. After three seasons at the Metropolitan, she terminated her contract to concentrate on the preparation and study of soprano roles. She had already successfully essayed the role of Brünnhilde in *Die Walküre* on the 27th of December, 1905. It was not until Walker changed into a dramatic soprano that her real popularity began. In her new role, America never really knew her, since her one performance as Brünnhilde was not remembered.

### A Great Star in her Day

One has only to mention the name of Edyth Walker to the older generation in Germany 35 or 40 years ago, or to read the magazines and newspapers of the periods, to realize that she was regarded as one of the great operatic personalities of the times. Her Salome and Elektra were perhaps the greatest interpretations these exacting roles ever received. Her Fidelio evoked comparison with Schröder-Devrient. In time, her voice suffered from the great intensity with which she used it. Her Isolde and Brünnhilde are, however, still spoken of with affectionate regard in Amsterdam. Her fame as a Wagnerian singer brought her honor of two appearances as Ortrud and Kundry at Bayreuth in 1908. She created Klytemnestra in the first *Elektra* at Covent Garden.

During the war of 1914-18, Walker lived in Holland. She did not return to America until after 1930. Her last operatic performance in Amsterdam was as Brünnhilde in *Die*

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*Götterdämmerung* in 1918. Her voice at this time was almost a total ruin, but she gave such a fascinating performance that ever since every dramatic soprano, appearing at Amsterdam, is compared with her, and few have been found worthy of her. Some H.M.V. discs exist of her soprano voice, unfortunately rather badly recorded. Yet, in some of these, particularly Schubert's *Die Allmacht* and the aria from Wagner's *Rienzi*, one senses something of her genius as an interpreter. She taught in both Paris and New York, and has left us one fine singer, Blanche Thebom, who clearly shows the influence this truly great interpretative artist had upon her development.

Martha Attwood, who died on April 7th, left us only two electric Columbia records, but these were not operatic selections. This soprano was the first Liu in Puccini's *Turandot* at the Metropolitan in 1926-27. She was with the opera company four seasons, but did not sing too often. It comes as a surprise to find that she was born in 1887, and was consequently 40 when she created the role of Liu. Little is known about her activities before she joined the Metropolitan, except that she sang in Italy for some years under the name of Marta Atti in the smaller opera houses. She later became a successful teacher, who had for a time her own music school on Cape Cod, from which she originally hailed.

### A Scottish Soprano

Noel Eadie, the Scottish coloratura soprano, who died on April 8th, was badly served by the gramophone. All that remains of her voice is her singing of the third Norn in the old H.M.V. set of *Götterdämmerung*, an early Trio from *Faust*, the Quartet from *Rigoletto*, and medley from *Carmen* (these latter sung in English), and an electric record (H.M.V. C1542), now withdrawn, of the "Hymn to the Sun" from *Le Coq d'or* and the "Chanson hindou" from *Sadko* (sung in French). The latter is the most valued souvenir of her artistry.

Miss Eadie, born at Paisley in 1901, studied to be a pianist before devoting herself as a singer. She made her operatic debut at Covent Garden in 1931, where she distinguished herself in the role of the Queen of the Night in *The Magic Flute*. The next season she appeared with the Chicago Opera Company. In 1935 and 1936, she sang at Glynde-



Edyth Walker as Ostrud

bourne in *The Abduction* and *The Magic Flute*. Critics praised her well-poised voice as "an admirable musical instrument, equable and pure." No other Queen of the Night of her generation, said Richard Capell, "caused so few qualms." Despite the praise accorded her, she never had the career she deserved.

Giuseppe Borgatti, Italy's most famous Wagnerian tenor, died on October 18th in his seventy-ninth year (he was born 1871). He created the name part of Giordano's *Andrea Chenier* in 1908, and afterwards created the role of Siegfried at La Scala. Previously, he went to Bayreuth to prepare for the part, and for a decade afterwards was invariably the tenor whenever a Wagnerian opera was given in any one of the leading Italian opera houses. His Walther, Tristan, Siegfried, Lohengrin, and Tannhäuser were vocally and stylistically up to the most exacting Wagnerian standards. Recently, when asked what I considered the best recording of Siegmund's *Liebeslied*, I unhesitatingly said Borgatti's, to the vast amazement of my interviewer.

At the height of his career, Borgatti suddenly lost his eyesight. It is said that this occurred during a performance of Tristan under the direction of Toscanini. Though his voice was unimpaired, he retired to teach. One of his pupils was the English tenor, Heddle Nash. Borgatti recorded a few items for Fonotopia in 1905, but later recorded more extensively for Pathé. It is about time that some of the latter were re-issued by one of the historic societies. Surprisingly, he made two electric recordings for Italian Columbia, one of which is still listed to this day, evidencing his great popularity after all the years. These were sung years after his retirement, but they sound as though they were made by a singer in his prime. His "Death Scene" from *Otello* is poignant and authoritative, and vocally considerably better than Tamagno's.

It is a curious coincidence that the same year Italy lost her foremost Wagnerian tenor, France should mourn hers, Paul Franz. He died in April. Like so many important French singers, he was not too well known outside of this country, though he appeared with great success at Covent Garden in 1909 where he created Samson. Later, he sang the role for the first time in South America and Italy. His real name was Francois Gautier. This has led some collectors to believe that he was the mysterious Mr. Gautier who recorded for G & T, Lyrophone, Odeon and other companies in the old days. This was not true, for he did not make his debut until 1908, when he won a tenor competition which led immediately to his engagement at the Opéra. Though he sang most of the leading French tenor parts in *Faust*, *Les Huguenots*, *Sigurd*, *Samson*, *Romeo et Juliette*, etc. and created several important roles in such operas as d'Indy's *Légende de Saint Cristophe*, Dupont's *Antar*, Rabaud's *Fille de Roland*, and sang in the 1921 revival of Berlioz's *Les Troyens*, it is above all as a Wagnerian tenor that Franz will be remembered in his own country.

### A Great Wagnerian Tenor

He sang every important Wagnerian role except Rienzi, and so well that Siegfried Wagner recognized him as the finest Tristan, Siegfried and Parsifal of his time. He was invited to Bayreuth, and was actually staying there during the summer of 1914, studying the parts in German, when the war prevented

his appearance at the famous Wagnerian shrine. He was the first Parsifal in Paris in 1914. Like Borgatti, Melchior, and Urlus, he kept his voice a long time, as he was still in his prime around 1935, when he retired to become a professor at the Conservatoire. His many fine electrical recordings on Pathé and Columbia (only issued in France) are permanent facsimiles of his sound vocal technique and endurance power. They were all made when he was 55 or over. In the acoustic days, he was a red label H.M.V. artist, practically the only French singer whose European recordings were thought worthy of the honor (with later Anseau). Even Maurice Renard was black label in France, as was Journet, despite his many American red seal Victrola. Franz also recorded many hill-and-dale discs for Pathé. He was 72 when he died.

### Gemma Bellincioni

Another great Italian artist of the past, Gemma Bellincioni, the creator of Santuzza, died on April 23rd in her eighty-fifth year. She was so old that few believed she was still living, yet she was actively teaching up until her death. She was the last link with a great past. This we realize when we read that she made her debut in 1881 with Enrico Tamberlick, the noted Italian dramatic tenor (1820-1889). Originally, a "bel canto" singer, with a true legato style, she sang everything from coloratura roles to Aida. During her career she sang at all the leading opera houses in Italy, toured Germany, Austria, Portugal, France and Russia. She sang at Covent Garden in 1895, and visited South America in 1899. Her success as an actress caused her to push her natural voice and after she created the role of Santuzza, she became the first of opera singers who put acting before vocal display. Because of her freely acknowledged gifts as an actress, she is still spoken of with respect, but her vocal artistry deteriorated early, as her 1903-04 G&T records show. In later years, she suffered from an excessive tremolo, which audiences seemed to ignore being so absorbed by her impersonations. Among her greatest parts was Salome, which she created in Italy, Fedora, which she also created in its world premiere with Caruso as Loris, Tosca, Santuzza, Carmen and Violetta. She sang until her sixtieth year, when she appeared with her own company in Holland, appearing as Carmen and Tosca, almost voiceless, yet attracting audi-

ences full of actors and actresses all of whom watched her every movement with absorbed interest. With Duse, she was the greatest actress Italy has produced. Certainly she was the greatest actress among opera singers. Though her name figures in Fonotipia advertisements of artists around 1905, it is doubtful if she ever made records for this company.

Bellincioni's G&T records are very rare, and greatly preferable over her Pathé's. The latter she disliked intensely. They are indeed anything but enjoyable tonally. Her tremolo on these is very bad. Her earlier G&T discs reveal her in better voice, but even these are not free of tremolo. Her interpretations are moving, nonetheless, but of course no recording can do justice to an artist whose best points were in her acting. She lived for many years in Holland until Mussolini called her back to Italy to give her an opera school in Rome, as he believed Italy's greatest artist should devote her experience to the building of a new generation of operatic actors. It is well to mention this one good deed of Mussolini. It is to his favor, as it came as a Godsend to Bellincioni when she was pining away in The Hague, without pupils, destitute. It provided her thereafter with 24 years of activity and usefulness.

I am still learning of the deaths of several more singers during the war, which were reported only in local papers. Last year, in my *Singers' Toll*, I mentioned a number of German artists. This year, I shall make a survey of French singers.

In 1943, Albert Vaguet died at the age of 78. He was the most popular tenor of the old French Pathé company. He never made any lateral, needle-cut records. Because of this and the added fact that he made so many recordings for Pathé, collectors rather perversely took the viewpoint that he was no one of consequence. Actually he was a highly esteemed lyric tenor of the Opéra during the few years of his career, greatly admired as Don Ottavio, Joseph and in other leading lyric roles until an accident necessitated the amputation of a leg, forcing him to retire before he was 40. Since that time, he lived at Pau, making his records after his retirement as obviously his voice was unimpaired.

In 1943, Max Bouvet (baritone on Pathé labels) and Hubert Paty (bass on G&T and Lyrophone labels) also died. Neither singer is of more than of secondary interest.

More important was Marguerite Chamberlan, a coloratura soprano, who died at the age of 76 in 1944 at Marseilles. She sang with considerable success in America with the Paris Grand Opera Company in its 1911 tour (Gustarello Alfré was the principle tenor of that company.) Her Lucia and Juliette were highly praised in San Francisco. She recorded for Pathé and Odeon but her brilliant high voice was badly reproduced by both concerns, causing frequent blasting.

Still more important to American readers is the death of Gustave Huberdeau at 71, in 1945. For many years, he was one of the principal bass singers of the Chicago Opera Company, where he appeared in a great variety of roles with the most important casts. He sang in Mozart's *Figaro* with Sammarco, Teyte and Carolina White. He was in the premiere cast of Victor Herbert's *Natoma*. He consistently sang Sparafucile in *Rigoletto*, Colline in *La Bohème*, and Mephistopheles. All the principal bass parts were allotted to him, including the Father in *Louise*. He had taken part many years before in a minor part in the premiere of *Louise* in Paris, and also in Massenet's *Grisélidis*. He continued to sing until the outbreak of the Second World War. In 1935, I met him in Amsterdam, where he was heard as the Doctor in *Pelléas et Mélisande*, with his friend and contemporary Félix Vieuille as Arkel. Huberdeau created the latter role in Amsterdam in 1927. He also appeared in small roles in various French films. For a singer of his importance, the gramophone served him badly. He made some old Odeons which were very good but rare and not very plentiful. His *Chalet* aria is quite in the Plancon manner, and his *Huguenols* aria is better than the Delmas version. In America, he recorded for Pathé, but only one record is known to me; it contains Schumann's *Deux Grenadiers* and Massenet's *Elégie*! He also made Edison Amberola cylinders, which are unplayable by modern collectors. A tempting item is an acoustic French H.M.V., made about 1920, of operatic airs, but I have never managed to find this. Huberdeau also deserves inclusion on the historical societies' planned lists of re-issues. I believe that Alice Raveau, who also died in 1945, has already received an obituary. Her Orphée in the set now re-issued by Vox is still the preferred singing of this role on records, despite the new version with Ferrier.



## Editorial Notes

(Continued from page 150)

able to lead listeners to expect commercial equipment to do it smoothly. Emory Cook and the Fairchild people, I know, have produced experimental discs which *can* be played, with the full range efficiently engraved. Commercial pressings, in my estimation, have some way to go to reach that degree of excellence. In any case, equipment which could *actually* deliver the extreme highs and lows, would present such a display of horrors when handling the usual run of records and radio broadcasts, that pass-band filters would have to be switched in most of the time.

"I do beg you, and the staff of technicians whose good advice is frequently reflected in your pages, not to mistake the residue of distorted, but measureable tag ends of response above 8,000 and below 50 cps, in most fine speaker systems, for the same sort of response that can be quite demonstrably delivered by amplifiers and many other audio components. It looks as if, a long time ago, some irresponsible or uninformed claims were made for speaker systems; these seem to have snowballed until even the most reputable manufacturers feel forced to claim fantastically more than the state of the art permits, lest some maker of \$12.50 bargain-specials out-claim them. So very few users can make any sort of accurate, quantitative check on the claims that, for the most part, responsible contradiction of the claims is missing. Sincerely yours, Ross H. Snyder."

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Readers in the Washington, D. C. area may be interested to learn that a Washington Society for Recorded Music has been formed. The society is an unincorporated, nonprofit group composed of persons primarily interested in serious music, especially as recorded, and in the techniques and equipment of recording and reproduction, also the problems of the record consumer. Meetings of the society are held every five to seven weeks, on Sunday evenings. Annual dues are \$2.00. Interested parties in the Washington and nearby Maryland and Virginia areas, who wish to join the activities of an organized group of kindred spirits should write or phone the Secretary, Stanley Metalitz, 3532 A St., S.E., Washington 19, D. C. (Axminster 8300, extension 161).

London Gramophone Corporation's policy of letting a reviewer behind the scenes to report on forthcoming issues is a trait widely admired by interested readers and those record buyers who operate a budget. I need not add that that takes in practically everyone interested in serious music.

Here are a few of the titles that London plans to release during February and March:  
**BARBER:** *Cello Concerto*; Nelsova, Barber and New Symphony Orchestra. *Medea* and *Symphony No. 2*; Barber and New Symphony Orchestra.

**BARTOK:** *Violin Concerto*; Rostal, Sargent and the London Symphony.

**BEETHOVEN:** *Piano Sonata, Op. 81a* and *Eroica Variations*; Guldá. *Quartet No. 15*; Griller. *Quartet No. 9*; New Italian. *Symphony No. 4*; Solti and London Philharmonic.

**BLISS:** *Quartet No. 2*; Griller.

**BYRD:** *Mass for Four Voices*.

**CHOPIN:** *Recital Backhaus*.

**DEBUSSY:** *Song Recital*; Danco.

**FAURE and FRANCK:** *Violin Sonatas*; Bobesco and Gentí.

**LISZT:** *Piano Recital*; Kempff.

**LOEWE:** *Ballads*; Strienz.

**MOZART:** *Symphonies No. 29 and 36*; Bohm and Vienna Philharmonic. *Divertimento No. 17, K.334*; Vienna Octet.

**PERGOLESI:** *Concertina in F minor* and **RESPIGHI:** *Arie Antiche*; Stuttgart Chamber Orchestra.

**RACHMANINOFF:** *24 Preludes*; Lympani.

**ROSSINI-RESPIGHI:** *La Boutique Fantasque*; Ansermet and London Sym.

**SCHUBERT:** *Piano Sonata in B Flat (Posth.)*; Kempff.

**SIBELIUS:** *String Quartet*; Griller.

**STRAVINSKY:** *Firebird Suite* and *Sacre du Printemps*; Ansermet and Suisse Romande. *Symphony of Psalms*; Ansermet, London Philharmonic and Chorus (new recording).

**VERDI:** *String Quartet* and **SCHUMANN:** *Quartet, Op. 41, No. 2*; New Italian.

**WAGNER:** Acts 1 and 3 of *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. *Rienzi Overture* and *Forest Murmurs*; Knappertsbusch and Vienna Philharmonic, etc.

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# PRADES FESTIVAL RECORDS

By C. J. Luten

THE PRADES FESTIVAL, which took place in June of last year, surpassed by a good margin its avowed intention to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the death of Sebastian Bach. As much as anything else it was a tribute to that splendid musician, artist, and human being Pablo Casals.

Long retired in protest against a world which would tolerate a government led by such a man as Francisco Franco, Casals had for years busied himself in Prades with matters musical, political, and humanitarian. Last year Alexander Schneider, a violinist of considerable renown in the chamber music field and a former pupil of Casals, decided that the great Spanish musician had to be heard again no matter what. With full knowledge and sympathy for Casals' feeling about the world and about Bach's music ("the highest manifestation of the human spirit"), Schneider assembled an international cast of musicians designed to make an impresario's mouth water and assured Casals that they were at his service on his or Bach's terms. Casals's terms, characteristic of his strength and humanity and passionate adoration of the Leipzig Cantor, were happily a festival to be held in Prades, a tiny French town that lies in the shadow of the Pyrenees.

The fruit of this memorable musical and human event has been preserved for all of us to taste. On ten 12" LP discs (available as a set for \$50 or separately at \$4.85 each) Columbia has recorded a double handful of the great and near-great works of Bach that were performed by divers instrumentalists and Casals during the festival.

Like much of man's attempt to preserve beauty — to keep it from vanishing away — these records are only partially successful and apparently only an abbreviated account of what went on at the festival. According to musical reporters who attended the affair, there was a halo of beauty about the forehead of virtually every performance heard in

Prades' great, damaged Gothic Cathedral of St. Pierre. But these records, while giving a certain feeling of sympathy and consecration, are in almost every case incomplete musical delights.

Could it be that much of the sense of fulfillment, which all of the Prades pilgrims reported, was based on things unmusical? The personal connotations surrounding Casals the man, the religious atmosphere of the cathedral itself, the communicative devotion that all the players and the members of the audience shared, an imagined glimpse of the strong faith and spirit of old Bach himself at a moment when an anxious and faithless world seems bent on destroying itself? That would be my guess; for most of these records, in spite of many cherishable elements, seem to suggest that musically the Prades Festival was something of a noble and ambitious failure. If there are to be future generations of musicians and music-loving laymen, I believe that they are apt to feel the same way; for by that time Casals cannot be more than just a name to them. Such is the fate of artists who perform. Musical history is ever on the side of the creator.

A clue to one of the principal reasons for the festival's occasional falls from grace can be found, I think, in two quotations taken from the record envelopes. Eugene Istomin remarks that "Casals stands for everything that is noble and sublime in music, and you feel unafraid to express it yourself after you have met this man." Casals at one of his rehearsals (which are described as "more like co-operative undertakings than like the tyrannical affairs orchestral rehearsals sometimes are") says to his players, "Now we shall improvise. All my life I am working for the right expression of this piece . . . Perhaps we can find it together."

These quotations — one by an obviously inspired young pianist, the other by an evident champion of humanism whose leadership

permits the full expression of ideas and feelings by others — beautiful in themselves, are nevertheless fraught with the dangers of “undiscipline” and that quality of indecision (based on different ideas by a number of sensitive people about the same subject) which are capable of spoiling more things than orchestral performances. Here then is real irony.

It is all too easy to document what I have been talking about. In virtually any movement of any of the works that Casals conducts (not those in which he acts as an accompanying conductor — a word about that later) there are short and long moments of undisciplined thinking and playing, poor balance, questionable rhythm, an improper observance of note values, and unprecise ensemble.

### Volumes I-IV

Let us take the discs in order: **Vol. 1** — *Brandenburg Concerto No. 1 in F*; A. Schneider (violin), L. Thevet, G. Coursier (horns), M. Tabuteau, L. Storch, J. Mack (oboes), M. Allard (bassoon). *No. 2 in F*; M. Mule (soprano saxophone), A. Schneider (violin), J. Wummer (flute), M. Tabuteau (oboe), P. Tortelier (cello). *No. 3 in G*. All with The Prades Festival Orchestra conducted by Pablo Casals. ML-4345. **Vol. 2** — *Brandenburg Concerto No. 4 in G*; A. Schneider (violin), J. Wummer, B. Goldberg (flutes). *No. 5 in D*; E. Istomin (piano), J. Szigeti (violin), J. Wummer (flute). Both with the P.F.O. under Casals. ML-4346. **Vol. 3** — *Brandenburg Concerto No. 6 in B Flat*; the P. F. O. under Casals (coupled with excerpts from *The Musical Offering* — a not very interesting *Ricercare a 3* played with a certain heaviness of thought by Leopold Mannes, pianist; the beautiful *Sonata a 3* well played by A. Schneider (violin), J. Wummer (flute), L. Teraspulskey (cello), and Leopold Mannes; and the occasionally powerful *Ricercare a 6* played by A. Schneider, O. Pernel (violins), M. Thomas, K. Tuttle (violas), L. Teraspulskey, D. Saldenberg (cellos), and J. Rotenberg, bass). ML-4347. **Vol. 4** contains the *Suite No. 1 in C for Orchestra* and the *Suite No. 2 in B Minor for Flute and Orchestra*; the orchestra is again that of the Prades Festival under Casals; the flute soloist is John Wummer. ML-4348.

In Vol. 1, along with the defects I have mentioned, there are moments of highly inter-

esting and individual phraseology by Casals as well as some beautiful solo playing by Schneider and Tabuteau in the *Brandenburg Concerto No. 1*; a jerky, hectic performance of the first movement of *No. 2* that, for one thing, traps Schneider in the middle of an expressive device in his first open solo and leaves him practically no time to catch up and, for another, drowns out much of the soprano saxophone which is substituted for the prescribed trumpet; and a most expressive performance of *No. 3* that is marred for me only by some inaccurate chord balances.

Vol. 2 offers a well-paced performance of *No. 4* made notable for the bright, airy flute playing of Wummer and Goldberg, and disconcerting by some of Schneider's rhythmic liberties and some very messy ensemble in the first movement midway through the development of the principal theme. There is also a performance of *No. 5* in which the violin and piano too often blanket the flute, but which has redeeming features like the exquisite lightness achieved by Szigeti and Wummer in the violin and flute dialogue that precedes the second entry of the main theme in the first movement. Istomin, however, plays a good deal of the time with wooden rhythm and his first movement cadenza lacks requisite continuity. I must also add that the beginning of the third movement is much too rigid in rhythm.

Vol. 3, in addition to the excerpts from *The Musical Offering*, contains Casal's interpretation of the *Sixth Brandenburg Concerto* for violas and cellos. It is spirited, a trifle brusque, and rhythmically alive and uniform (for once) in the corner movements, just a bit dull and heavy in the *Adagio*. Again there are several instances of ragged attack and frayed ensemble.

### Beautiful Orchestral Playing

Vol. 4 contains the most beautiful orchestral playing to be found in this collection. Note how noble and imposing the introduction to the *Suite No. 1* emerges, what verve and zest there is in the *Bourée* and *Passepied*. Moreover, there is the beautifully modelled phraseology in the opening section of the *Overture* in the *Suite No. 2*, the urgency of the *Rondeau*, the appropriate lightness in the *Badinerie* with lovely playing by Wummer. On the other hand there is some rough ensemble playing in the middle sections of the

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Overtures in No. 1 and No. 2, and in the *Bourée* of No. 2. Poor balancing occasionally obscures Wummer's flute.

### The Great Casals

Everything takes a turn for the best in the next two discs. Here Casals, perhaps the greatest string player of our century, performs the three sonatas for cello and piano (originally for viola da gamba and harpsichord) with an originality and a soaring freedom of thought that is unhampered by nothing save his accompanist, Paul Baumgartner, on a few rare occasions. Casals does not have to contend with other musicians now; he is free to use his subtle and powerful musical mind and his masterful fingers to make works which are seldom exciting seem for a time in-candescent.

In Vol. 5 (ML-4349) are the first two sonatas — No. 1 in G and No. 2 in D. Both of these works are actually in two long movements, each with a slow and a fast section. Expressively the works are similar. The slow sections are spacious and reflective, the fast portions have a sturdy strength, spirit, and no little jollity. Just of few of Casals' technical tools that must be mentioned in connection with his illumination of these works are the evenness of his noble *cantilena*, his fabulous tonal coloration, his perfect intonation, his wide range of dynamics, and his exciting individual rhythm.

Vol. 6 (ML-4350) features Casals in wonderful form with Baumgartner in the *Sonata No. 3 in G Minor*, along with handsome performances by the pianist Rudolf Serkin of two often-played works that were conceived for and sound better on the harpsichord — *Chromatic Fantasy and Fugue in D Minor* and the *Italian Concerto in F*.

Casals as an accompanying conductor is one of the major subjects of the next three discs. With the Prades Festival Orchestra he assists Isaac Stern and Marcel Tabuteau in the *Concerto for Violin and Oboe in C Minor*, and Stern and Alexander Schneider in the *Concerto for Two Violins in D Minor* in Vol. 7 (ML-4351); Mieczyslaw Horszowski, Schneider, and John Wummer in the *Concerto in A Minor for Piano, and Flute*, and Joseph Szigeti in the *Concerto for Violin in D Minor* in Vol. 8 (ML-4352). In Vol. 9 (ML-4353), Casals and the P. F. O. accompany Isaac Stern in the *Concerto for Violin in A Minor*

and Clara Haskil in the *Concerto for Piano in F Minor*. Also included in this volume are Eugene Istomin's thoughtful, clean-fingered, but somewhat mannered performance, of the *Toccata and Fugue in E Minor*, that could be more rhythmically secure; and Stern, Wummer, and Istomin's superb rendition of the exquisite *Trio Sonata for Violin, Flute, and Piano in G*.

I suspect that even as an accompanying conductor Casals sets the expressive mood for any of the works listed above. His musical personality is that strong. If any of the soloists play Casals' way or happen to feel a work as Casals does, the results are generally excellent. And occasionally the results are magnificent: e.g., in the *Violin and Oboe Concerto* where Tabuteau and Stern play like celestial beings and in the slow movement in the *Concerto for Two Violins* where Stern and Schneider invite comparison with the celebrated acoustical version by Kreisler and Zimbalist.

### Varying Styles

I feel that Casals and Haskil get a bit too free with rhythm in their otherwise good performance of the *F Minor Piano Concerto* and would, therefore, prefer the old Edwin Fischer version. Stern gives a good account of the *A Minor Violin Concerto* except for some occasional mannered phrasing. Szigeti plays with more delicacy and an even greater awareness of light and shade than he did in his earlier excellent recorded performance of the great *D Minor Violin Concerto* with Stiedry and The New Friends of Music Orchestra.

But in this new recording he lacks some of the fire and that extra technical security he once possessed. And while Casals gives a greater amount of the accompanying detail than Stiedry did, he does not have the latter's admirable directness.

I think the *Triple Concerto in A Minor* deserves special attention, for it is a work of the greatest brilliance and daring (note but the sustained bass pedal point under the piano cadenza in the last movement) and it has been unavailable on records for quite some time. The material in this composition is actually an astonishing reworking by Bach of some of his own music previously written for other instruments. Thus the first and concluding movements are based on a *Prelude and Fugue in A Minor*, while the middle move-

ment stems from the slow section of Bach's *Organ Sonata No. 3 in D Minor*. The playing of this work requires the greatest care in matters of execution and balance. While Horszowski, Schneider, Wummer, and Casals scarcely come through unscathed, they do manage to give the piece its due, which is a good deal more than Pessl, Blaisdell, Kroll and a string orchestra under Bamberger were able to do in their old and long withdrawn Victor version.

This collection is brought to a memorable close by Yvonne Lefebure, whose exact metrical scansion (particularly welcome after so much rhythmic freedom), excellent technique and sensibilities enable her to produce an outstanding performance of the great *Prelude and Fugue in E Flat Minor* from Book I of *The Well-Tempered Clavichord*. Also in Vol. 10 (ML-4354) are moderately good performances by Horszowski of the *English Suite No. 5 in E Minor* and by Wummer and Mannes of the *Sonata for Flute and Piano in B Minor*.

In an attempt to dodge the reality these discs so clearly indicate, many of the Prades musical pilgrims have said that Columbia's engineers did a poor job and have pointed out that the recordings were accomplished in the refectory of a girls' school rather than in the cathedral where the festival took place. To my ears, however, and those of a well-known concert violinist of my acquaintance who attended the festival, these recordings sound for the most part quite satisfactory. I would therefore suggest to those who insist on keeping their questionable memories that they own up to lotus-eating and be done with it.

## THE GREAT VIVALDI

**VIVALDI:** *Il cimento dell' armonia e dell' invenzione, Op. 8, Nos. 5-12*; Louis Kaufman (violin) with the Concert Hall Symphony Orchestra conducted by Clemens Dahinden. Concert Hall set CHC-1064, 2-12" LP's, \$11.90.

▲THIS RECORDING is a must for the purchaser of beautiful and enduringly entertaining music, for the record collector of vital music of historical importance, and for the sensitive and discriminating listener who cher-

ishes superb performance of such music combined with flawless recording. It is also "new" music in that, despite its 300 years, it had hitherto been only a name and had to await the research of Louis Kaufman to present it to a music world which must revise increasingly upwards its former estimates of Vivaldi.

*Il cimento*, like the *Well-Tempered Clavichord of The Art of the Fugue*, embodies the scientific spirit of the Baroque period. It attempts to plumb the resources of a musical style and to explore and widen the possibilities of the violin as a solo instrument. The work consists of twelve concertos known as *Opus 8* and bears the over-all title *Il cimento dell' armonia e dell' invenzione*. The first four, *The Seasons*, were recorded about a year ago by Louis Kaufman and the Concert Hall String Orchestra under the direction of Swoboda.

In practice, the concerto grosso features interplay between the *tutti* (string orchestra) and the *concertino* (3 solo instruments — generally two violins and a cello). Whatever subtleties of expression it achieved derived from the constant shifting of weight from *tutti* to *concertino* and *vice versa*. Even before Vivaldi's time, experiments were attempted in the makeup of the *concertino* so that its complement could range from one to four instruments and it could include an unorthodox oboe, flute, etc. Vivaldi and Bach were especially successful in their experiments — witness the enduring freshness of the *Brandenburg Concertos* and the fact that Bach saw fit to copy Vivaldi's concerti for study purposes and to rearrange about twenty for the organ and clavier.

The solo violin serves as the *concertino* in *Opus 8*. It was only natural for Vivaldi, the foremost violinist of his time, to favor the instrument. The proving ground for his compositions was the *Ospedale della Pieta*, a foundling home for girls in Venice. Its orchestra and choral group under the direction of Vivaldi became famous all over Europe so that it is referred to admirably in the memoirs of many travelers of the day. It was for this institution that he wrote more than 250 concertos at the rate of two a month for many years. Vivaldi so widened the technique of violin playing and advanced the role of the violin that composers after him were able to

(Continued on page 182)

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# Record Notes and Reviews

**T**HERE IS IN SOULS a sympathy with sounds, and as the mind is pitched the ear is pleased with melting airs, or martial, brisk, or grave, some chord in unison with what we hear, is touched within us and the heart replies. *(Largo)*

## Orchestra

**BACH, C. P. E.:** *Sinfonia in D major; Sinfonia in C major; Concerto in A minor; Vienna Symphony Orchestra, with Franz Holletschek (piano) in the concerto, Henry Swoboda, conductor. Westminster LP disc WL 50-40, \$5.95.*

**BACH, J. C.:** *Sinfonia Concertante in E flat; BACH, C. P. E.:* *Sinfonia in D major; Sinfonia in C major; Vienna Symphony Orchestra conducted by Dr. Felix Guenther. Vanguard LP disc BG 504, \$5.95.*

▲ONE IS CONFRONTED here with two performances of Carl Philipp Emanuel Bach's symphonies in fine performances and first-rate recordings. Though the approach to these works is quite different, one feels that the tempi adopted by both conductors are equally cogent. Vanguard, steeped in tradition and pursuing the purist's path, informs us that Dr. Guenther who adopts the more leisurely style uses the original editions of the symphonies and includes the cembalo in the *C major*. Swoboda is more robust in his treatment of the music and, like most modern conductors, does not include the harpsichord. Too, his orchestra is more sizable and therefore more richly resonant in sound, and Westminster's recording is more brilliant and alive. The inclusion of the harpsichord in the 18th-century orchestra was one of expediency, it served to keep the players together and to maintain intonation. To one, who likes the sound of a full string orchestra, the harpsichord becomes a tinkling intrusion; it is a bit too prominent in the Vanguard recording of the *C major*, in my estimation.

Philipp Emanuel was a far greater composer than his brother Johann Christian. The latter's *Sinfonia Concertante* is a polished opus, full of pleasing melodies but too reminiscent of what Mozart did better. The inclusion of a fine concerto by Philipp Emanuel on the Westminster disc does place a spotlight on that release, but the question of the piano gives the purist the opportunity to intrude a shadow over the beam of light. Holletschek plays the piano in the manner of the harpsichord but, on the whole, manages to achieve more agreeable sounds than he might have from the latter instrument.

Authorities disagree on whether Philipp Emanuel intended the use of a harpsichord or a piano. Tovey contends that the composer preferred a piano to a harpsichord in his symphonies — then why not in his concertos? It is quite obvious from the notes on the Vanguard release that knowledge of the Westminster version existed, so a special paragraph on the *urtext* edition of Philipp Emanuel's symphonies is included. If Dr. Swoboda uses different editions, it should be noted that they serve to bring out dramatic contrasts more tellingly in the *D minor Symphony*.

To sum up, I like both performances. There is much to be said in favor of Dr. Guenther's more leisurely paced readings. But the intensity of Swoboda's preoccupation with these symphonies is often more exciting and a choice between these releases will be a decidedly personal one. I certainly urge the reader to hear both discs, for the music of this Bach is well worth knowing. —J.N.



**BEETHOVEN:** *Symphony No. 3 in E Flat, Op. 55; The Concertgebouw Orchestra of Amsterdam* conducted by **Erich Kleiber**. London LP disc LLP-239, \$5.95.

▲THIS NEW VERSION of the ever wondrous *Eroica* stands up well beside any of its competitors. It is unusually well paced, neatly detailed, and altogether an effective statement of the work's content. If Kleiber's conducting does not have the touching inwardness and exquisite blending, balancing, and phraseology of Furtwängler's (HMV-D.B. 9296/9302), it also does not have the changes of pace that disfigure the latter's interpretation.

I would prefer the Toscanini LP issued last spring by RCA Victor if the Maestro did not streamline the first and third movements as much as he does. I would hesitate to nominate the slack, over expansive Walter version for Columbia, and would not even consider the Mengelberg, Koussevitzky, or Sabata readings.

Recording merits are in my view on Furtwängler's side with Walter, the present version, and Toscanini as the also-rans in that order. The London disc may be *ffrr*, but I fail to hear the tympani in many passages, most notably in parts of the coda of the first movement. And the strings on several occasions sound unusually thin and wiry. I also believe that some of the climaxes in the second and fourth movements have been rather ruthlessly leveled.

—C.J.L.

**BERLIOZ:** *Beatrice and Benedict Overture*; **Boston Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Charles Munch**. RCA Victor 45 rpm disc 49-3078, 95c.

▲WHEN BERLIOZ finished *Beatrice and Benedict* in 1862, he remarked that he had done everything that he had to do. And what had he to do? Nothing less than the remodeling of the symphony, opera, oratorio, and the cantata. His ever active musical mind and his noble personality, elements of incalculable worth (if only for the composers of every generation from his to our own), broadened the musical horizon, let in more light.

Like Verdi, Berlioz wrote "conclusion" to his long line of distinguished works for the theatre with a comedy involving Shakespearean characters. As Jacques Barzun has so sagely pointed out in his *Berlioz and the*

*Romantic Century*: "In adopting the traditional alternation of song and speech it is as if Berlioz had wanted to re-emphasize, besides his kinship with Shakespeare, his undeviating principle that music should express none but musical situations."

The overture — the only well-known portion of this neglected score — is a jewel in its presentation and development of two of the main melodies of the work and its establishment of "the recurring contrast between lively coquetry and gentle melancholy — the melancholy of humor." It is enchantingly presented on the present disc by Munch and the Bostonians. Only the recording which levels off some of the climaxes and eschews the higher frequencies detracts from what is otherwise an unalloyed delight.

—C.J.L.

**BERNSTEIN:** *Symphony No. 2 for Piano and Orchestra* ("The Age of Anxiety"); **Lukas Foss** (piano) and the **Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra of New York** conducted by **Leonard Bernstein**. Columbia LP disc ML 4325, \$4.85.

▲FIRST REACTIONS to this disc — what wonderful orchestral playing and what a fine recording! Second thought: what a shame Bernstein didn't have more time and fewer distractions when he was assembling this piece. Parts of it suggest a considerable grandeur of conception; other sections are disappointingly stocked with cheap clichés.

I was very unhappy with the Robbins ballet when I first saw it last winter. It seemed to me to be the poorest thing that talented young man had done; and talking it over with my companions at the time, we came to the conclusion that it was the emptiness of the score that had failed the choreographer. Looking back at that performance, I realize now how badly the ballet orchestra under the redoubtable Leon Barzin played the work.

A few playings of this record reveal considerable worthwhile material. It is not, however, as touted by the program annotator, "a generation's spiritual confession" or as averred by the composer "the record of our difficult and problematical search for faith." It may well be a testimonial of the composer's search, but I resent his including the rest of us in a so-called soul-searching expedition that falls far short of the mark.

As for the style of writing, it could be classed as prime grade Hollywood modern, in

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# Collector's Corner

## "DIE FLEDERMAUS" HIGHLIGHTS

RISÉ STEVENS, PATRICE MUNSEL, REGINA RESNIK, JAMES MELTON, JAN PEECE and ROBERT MERRILL. Robert Shaw Chorus, RCA Victor Orch. Fritz Reiner, cond. DM 1457 \$8.50. WDM 1457 (45 rpm) \$6.20. LM 1114 (33½) \$5.45.

## ARTHUR FIEDLER and the Boston Pops Orchestra

Classical Juke Box (7 selections). DM 1441, \$4.00. WDM 1441 (45 rpm) \$3.35. LMX 1106 (33½) with The Comedians—Kabalevsky, \$4.85.

The Comedians, Op. 26—Kabalevsky. DM 1443, \$3.50. WDM 1443 (45 rpm) \$2.40. LMX 1106 (33½) with Classical Juke Box, \$4.85.

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—A.W.P.

**COUPERIN:** *Apotheose de Lulli; L'Imperiale;* Hewitt Chamber Orchestra conducted by Maurice Hewitt. Vox LP disc DL-6430, \$5.95.

▲**ORIGINALLY AVAILABLE** on imported Discophiles Francais discs, *L'Apotheose de Lully* is an amazing score of tremendous vitality, character and imagination which should be overlooked by no one. Anyone familiar with the haunting beauty of the *Third Lecon de Tenebres* cannot be too surprised that a Couperin instrumental work might have the same concentrated impact.

Maurice Hewitt, who may have made a bad impression in the past with his stultifying readings of Mozart and other German writers, is in his element here. The playing is completely warm-hearted, mellow and sincerely felt; the tempi just right.

*L'Imperiale* is somewhat less rewarding but still good for a relaxing quarter hour. The transfer to LP has been satisfactorily accomplished. In spite of an impending Desormière treatment for Oiseau Lyre, which was very well received in France, I would not hesitate to recommend the Hewitt version.

—A.W.P.

**DEBUSSY:** *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* and **DUKAS:** *L'Apprenti sorcier;* Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. **HONEGGER:** *Concertino for Piano and Orchestra;* Oscar Levant (piano) and the Columbia Symphony Orchestra conducted by Fritz Reiner. Columbia 10" LP disc ML-2156, \$3.85.

▲**THIS** is the first recording of Honegger's bright trifle that we have had since Eunice Norton, Ormandy, and the Minneapolis give it to us some fifteen years ago (Victor 8765—withdrawn). The work, though played without pause, falls into three easily distinguishable movements: a gay *allegro molto moderato* with predominant ostinato figuration in the piano part; a reflective dialogue between piano and woodwinds, then brass, with string support; and last, more rhythmic motor im-

pulse with a touch of ragtime. The *Concertino* sounds well and bears all of the earmarks of having been the work of an authentic "pro." Levant and Reiner give the piece its due. The recording is satisfactory.

The other side of this record holds two excellent dubbings of two shipshape performances by Ormandy and the Philadelphians previously issued on 78s. I don't care for the changes of time in the *Prélude* or the lack of any real atmosphere in the *Sorcier*.

—C.J.L.

**HAYDN:** *Notturmi Nos. 1, 2, 7 and 4* (for the King of Naples); **Vienna Chamber Orchestra** conducted by **Franz Litschauer.** Haydn Society LP disc HSLP-1023, \$5.95.

**HAYDN:** *Notturmo No. 4 in F major;* **EMS Chamber Orchestra** conducted by **Edward Fendler,** and **HAYDN:** *Sonatas in D major (No. 51) and in A major (No. 43);* **Charles Rosen** (piano). EMS LP disc No. 3, \$5.95.

▲**IN** 1790 Haydn wrote eight *Notturmi* for the King of Naples, who played on an instrument called the *lira organizzata*, a sort of hurdy-gurdy with strings and pipes worked by bellows in the interior. Later, Haydn changed the instrumentation of these works replacing the *lira* parts with flute and oboe, and the clarinet parts with violins. In the latter form, the *Notturmi* were performed by the composer in his Salomon concerts in England.

These works might be called miniature *sinfonias concertantes*, for they are very close in spirit to the famous *Sinfonia Concertante*, Op. 84 which Haydn wrote in England. There is a charm of intimacy and consistent gracefulness in the music of these compositions, which offer perfection in the balance of the small ensemble, dramatic restraint, and consistent songful melodiousness. As a program, there might not be sufficient dramatic variety to sustain interest at all times, but individually the nocturnes should be a welcome addition at any time to any evening's concert. First acquaintance has not established a preference for any one or the other of the four works; but having been subjected to *No. 4 in F major*, as a result of two recordings, I can heartily endorse it as a diverting opus.

The Haydn Society recording is tonally excellent with a mellow resonance. The performances are warm-hued, expressive but

rather free in the rhythmic treatment. The conductor tends to separate the music's sections with ritards which I feel Haydn did not truly indicate. Comparison with Fendler's treatment of the fourth nocturne leaves me convinced of this; Fendler is more assertive, more buoyant and rhythmically precise. His is the more persuasive approach to the music. As a recording, the Fendler version is more brilliant with none of the mellow resonance which I feel belongs rightfully to this music. But for those who like sharp clarity of string tone, this record will undoubtedly appeal.

Young Mr. Rosen is a sensitive, rather exact pianist, who allows himself few liberties. His performances of the two sonatas have a bright eagerness that belongs to youth. Excellent piano recording. —P.H.R.

**HAYDN: Toy Symphony; Boston Symphony Orchestra** conducted by **Serge Koussevitzky**. RCA Victor 45 rpm disc 49-3013, 95c.

▲THOSE who have requested an up-to-date recording of this joyous bit of children's music should be moderately pleased with this disc. It is superbly recorded. The performance, however, is all too business-like. —C.J.L.

**HAYDN: 12 Deutsche Tänze and 12 Katherine Menuetten** (Dances for the Redoutensaal); **Orchestra of the Vienna State Opera** conducted by **Dr. Hans Gillesberger**. Haydn Society LP disc HILSP-1022, \$5.95.

▲THESE COMPOSITIONS were written by Haydn for a Court ball held at the Redoutensaal, "the lovely baroque building facing the Josefsplatz in the center of Vienna." This was typical dance music of Haydn's time and shows the musical appreciation he had for the stately type of social dancing which prevailed. It is doubtful that the dancers on the night of November 25, 1792, when these pieces were first played, thought of them as concert works. This was functional music and its rhythmic grace was all that concerned those at the ball. Today, we no longer dance in the manner of Haydn's time and such music as this for diversion should be taken in small doses. As a program, this one becomes quite monotonous, though it is well enough performed and recorded. As a contribution to the purpose of the Haydn Society, the disc has considerable historical value; and we can

well believe that the unearthing of these pieces by the Society's researchers provided them a thrill. I only wish that I, as a listener, could share that thrill from the aural standpoint. —P.H.R.

**HUMPERDINCK: Hansel and Gretel — Prelude to Act 1; Leopold Stokowski and his Symphony Orchestra**. RCA Victor 45 rpm disc 49-1376, 95c.

▲STOKOWSKI seems fidgety about this work's expression. He continually, by changes in time or by dynamic monkey business, interrupts this music's simple, childlike continuity. His orchestra, however, plays wonderfully well. The recording and surfaces are subpar. —C.J.L.

**MEYERBEER-LAMBERT: Les Patineurs Ballet; Royal Opera House Orchestra, Covent Garden**, conducted by **John Hollingsworth**. **BLISS: Checkmate; Robert Irving** conducting the same orchestra. Columbia LP disc ML-4362, \$4.85.

▲HERE IS MUSIC that supports two popular choreographies in the Sadler's Wells Ballet Company's repertory. *Les Patineurs*, assembled from *Le Prophète* and *L'Etoile du Nord*, is distinguished only by the cleverness of Constant Lambert's arrangement. *Checkmate* is a collection of some of the better theater music clichés. It is like some of Bliss' work—full of meretricious melodies, block harmony, and muddy orchestral balances.

John Hollingsworth, the assistant conductor of the Wells, shows on this disc (as he did during the Sadler's Wells engagement in New York last fall) that he is a far superior leader to Robert Irving, musical director of the ballet. —C.J.L.

**MILHAUD: Opus Americanum No. 2 (Moses); Members of the French National Radio-diffusion Orchestra** conducted by **Darius Milhaud**. Capitol LP disc P-8114, \$4.85.

▲THE AMAZING SIMILARITY of this work to Stravinsky's ballet *Orpheus*, both in style of writing and emotional content, is an amusing but unimportant point for comment. There is no question of influence; each score is irrevocably cloaked in the well staked-out personality of its composer.

Milhaud completed his ballet at Mills College in 1940, Stravinsky his in Hollywood

1947. There is little evidence of traditional California sunshine in either piece; the French composer's effort is particularly somber in mood.

Milhaud's *Moses* is a stern, uncomprising old boy, long-winded, a trifle dull at times but always dignified. The orchestra playing and the recording are not the best I have heard, neither do they harbor any conspicuous fault.

—A.W.P.

**PROKOFIEFF:** *Symphony No. 6 in E Flat Minor, Op. 111*; Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Columbia LP disc ML-4328, \$4.85.

▲THE SIXTH SYMPHONY is not one of Prokofiev's most impressive orchestral works. Like the *Fifth Symphony*, it is predominantly a neo-Romantic composition of considerable proportions (its running time on this disc is 40 minutes). But unlike the earlier work, the *Sixth* contains in none of its three movements a section as remarkable for originality and concentration as the first movement of the *Fifth*.

In my view the *Fifth* is scarcely a complete succession of felicities, for it has in its second and fourth sections music that has no place in any symphony. As Virgil Thomson pointed out: "Their use of ostinato figures and brusque tempo changes reveals them as objectively inspired and clearly of the theater. Their poverty of intrinsic musical interest makes them inappropriate for concert use."

Well, the same can be said of the third movement of the *Sixth*. As sure as anything, it is a ballet accompaniment without the ballet.

The first two movements have their eloquent moments. The first begins impressively with a long asymmetrical melody of melancholy and austere feeling that is interestingly developed, but the second subject is built on a rhythmic figure that can be found in many of Prokofiev's ballet scores. The second movement has to its credit some fanciful passages that imitate the ringing of bells and a lovely melody for horns that occurs shortly before the recapitulation. But these worthy elements do not offset the weakness of the main theme, which distinctly recalls a famous melody from *Parsifal*, or the bits of romantic clichés that are used to pad out the movement.

What admiration I bear this work has come from my acquaintance with this record. I

heard the American premiere of the *Sixth* under Stokowski's direction, in November, 1949. In addition to the faults I still find, I was at that time under the impression that the piece was noisy and muddy as sound. Ormandy and the Philadelphians have corrected that impression and demonstrated, to my mind at least, that Prokofiev still knows how to orchestrate. In addition, the musicality of Ormandy's superb reading has made quite interesting certain other facets of this score that Stokowski obscured.

Columbia has apparently found the secret to recording the Philadelphia Orchestra in the Academy of Music; for this disc, the recent *Verklaerte Nacht*, and *Rhapsodie Espagnole* really sound like "our greatest orchestra." Indeed, the quality of the recording and the magnificent performance may make some listeners want this disc in spite of the music's inequalities.

—C.J.L.

**SIBELIUS:** *Finlandia* and *The Swan of Tuonela*. **RACHMANINOFF-CAILLIET:** *Preludes in C-sharp minor, Op. 3, No. 2*; in *G, Op. 32, No. 5*; in *G minor, Op. 23, No. 5*. The Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy. Columbia 10" LP disc ML-2158, \$3.85.

▲MUSIC HALL FARE conducted by a man who apparently has not forgot how to play such pieces. Good recording, very poor surfaces.

—C.J.L.

**TCHAIKOVSKY:** *The Nutcracker Suite*; Leopold Stokowski and his Symphony Orchestra. RCA Victor 10" LP disc LM-46, \$4.45.

▲REMEMBERING the success that Stokowski had with this perennial favorite in his earlier recording with the Philadelphia Orchestra, one had every reason to expect that this disc would be something special. It is unfortunately a disappointment in almost every musical way. It is difficult to recall when Stokowski (in matters of dynamics, tempi, phraseology, and texture) has invaded the area of questionable taste as often as he does in this work. And what he cannot do to the *Nutcracker*, he gets the engineer to do. One can almost feel the man at the volume control turn the sound down and then quickly up again for the "excitement" Stokowski wants in the *Trepak* and in the concluding portion of the *Waltz of the Flowers*.

—C.J.L.

**WAGNER:** *Lohengrin* — *Prelude to Act 1*; Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Serge Koussevitzky. RCA Victor 45 rpm disc 49-1378, 95c.

▲ALTHOUGH this is the most beautiful sounding *Lohengrin Prelude* yet, it has its mechanical and interpretive faults. The engineers have quite destroyed the effect of Wagner's huge climax by leveling the sonority to a point where it sounds *mf* instead of *fff*. The music does not move under Koussevitzky's direction as easily as it should, and there is some faulty intonation in the strings at the quiet close. Good surfaces. —C.J.L.

**WAGNER:** Scenes from *Parsifal*; Chorus of the Vienna State Opera and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Hans Knappertsbusch with Gunther Treptow (tenor). London 10" LP disc LPS-287, \$4.95.

▲THE *Prelude* and the *Transformation Scene* comprise the purely orchestral portions of this disc. Knappertsbusch's performances are over expansive and without the exciting tensions from note to note and the inner cohesive texture that Toscanini achieves in his RCA Victor recording of the *Prelude*. There are also some inaccurate chord balances here and in the *Transformation Scene*, which should have been recorded complete.

This disc further contains an almost complete performance of the dull *Flower Maidens' Scene* that begins with *Hier war das Tosen* and ends with Parsifal's lines, *Lass' ab! Ihr fangt mich nicht!* The distaff side of the Vienna State Opera Chorus does its duties well and Gunther Treptow is adequate in the brief passages he is required to sing.

The recording is far from the best London standards. Somewhat noisy surfaces.

—C.J.L.

## Concerto

**BEETHOVEN:** *Concerto No. 3 in C Minor*, Op. 37; Wilhelm Backhaus (piano) with the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Karl Bohm. London LP disc LLP-289, \$5.95.

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▲LONDON'S ENGINEERS have faithfully reproduced a singularly heavy-handed performance by Backhaus, Böhm, and the Vienna Philharmonic.

I suspect that Backhaus will have to take most of the blame for this disappointing disc, because he has apparently set the expressive tone for the whole performance. This tone is one of dead seriousness that may be all right for portions of Beethoven's late piano works, but it is hardly suitable for the witty and exhilarating passages in this concerto. Indeed, I cannot remember when such a splendid musician and technician as Backhaus has so far missed the point of the *rondo*. This movement is dragged unconscionably. And that is not all. There are a number of highly unusual retards and *luftpausen* and occasional *rubati* that are questionable to say the least, and some changes in tempo that are as tasteless as they are inaccurate.

Now an alert accompanist could have done something toward alleviating some of this overpressing somberness. But Böhm was not the conductor to do it. There is not a smile in his entire work.

Hang onto the superb Schnabel-Sargent-LPO performance (Victor set 194 withdrawn) if you have it. If you don't, try the Solomon-Boult-BBC version (HMV-DB6196/9).

—C.J.L.

MOZART: *Concerto in G* (K.216); Isaac Stern (violin) and conducting a chamber orchestra. BEETHOVEN: *Sonata No. 7 in C Minor, Op. 30, No. 2*; Isaac Stern (violin) and Alexander Zakin (piano). Columbia LP disc ML-4326, \$4.85.

▲THE REAL NEWS of this disc is its recording. The Mozart *Third Violin Concerto*, accomplished in Columbia's superb 30th Street studio in New York (Stern and Zakin's good performance of the much-recorded Beethoven *Sonata, Op. 30, No. 2* is a reissue and has been reviewed in these pages), is additional evidence that nobody — but nobody — makes any better recordings anywhere else in the world. The solo violin may be a trifle larger than life for the taste of your reviewer and the weight of the chamber orchestra, but that chamber orchestra's strings sound like real strings, its flutes, oboes, and horns sound like real woodwind and brass instruments. If only Stern's playing had the grace and charm that the music cries for, and if only instrumentalists would stop trying to play and con-

duct at the same time. Here the rhythm is so foursquare one could set a metronome by it.

—C.J.L.

POULENC: *Concerto in G Minor for Organ, String Orchestra and Tympani*; E. Power Biggs (organ) with the Columbia Symphony Orchestra conducted by Richard Burgin, Roman Szule (tympani), Joseph de Pasquale (viola solo), and Samuel Mayes (cello solo). FRANCK: *Prelude, Fugue and Variations, Op. 18* and *Piece héroïque*; E. Power Biggs (organ). Columbia LP disc ML-4329, \$4.85.

▲THE MOST PLEASANT SURPRISE of the month for your reviewer — a fresh and handsome work by Poulenc beautifully played by the executants listed above. Sweet in sound, elegantly varied in tonal and expressive coloration, it is the work of a master craftsman. Although played without interruption, the piece is made up of some half dozen contrasted sections that are alternately forceful and austere, astonishingly rollicking and puckish, warm and songful. Don't miss hearing it.

There are also first-rate performances by Biggs of two of Franck's most rewarding organ compositions.

Both recordings are outstanding. —C.J.L.

RAVEL: *Piano Concerto for the Left Hand*; Jacqueline Blanchard (piano) with L'Orchestre de le Suisse Romande conducted by Ernest Ansermet. *Piano Concerto in G*; Nicole Henriot (piano) with The Paris Conservatory Orchestra conducted by Charles Munch. London LP disc LLP-76, \$5.95.

▲IT IS my duty to report that these recordings sound all too much like London's first disappointing experiments with LP. And it's a crying shame. Both performances of these stylish, well made, lightweight concertos seem to be excellent.

I don't know what London has against French orchestral music, but there must be something to judge from the way they have sabotaged such excellent performances by Ansermet as his Debussy *Images* and Munch's Berlioz *Program*. Can't something be done about this? Why not make new recordings of these works under the same men that will do justice to everyone concerned? Such first class musical elements deserve no less.

—C.J.L.



# Chamber Music

**BAROQUE SONATAS FOR VIOLIN:** *Sonata in A minor, Sonata in G minor (Telemann) Sonata in B flat (Tartini); Sonata in E minor (Mattheson); Louis Kaufman* (violin) and *Antoine Geoffroy-Dechaume* (harpsichord). Lyrichord LP disc LL-8, \$5.95.

▲THIS RECITAL of early 18th-century chamber music is distinguished by the smooth, flawless musicianship of the two artists. The blend of the two instruments is excellently achieved, and the recording — made in France this past summer — is natural and tonally pleasing. Mr. Kaufman is especially partial to the Telemann sonatas. He played them at a meeting of the New York Society of Recorded Music on December 15, pointing out that the slow movements of both works were as deeply expressive as any Bach had written for violin and clavier; and the quick movements were full of a rare spontaneity and grace. I agree with the violinist and feel that these are indeed unusually fine examples of the composer's chamber work.

The Tartini and Mattheson are also appreciable examples of the Baroque style of writing, combining elative vitality and graceful expression. These are works which may well grow in appeal in repeated playing.

—P.H.R.

**BOCCHERINI:** *Trio No. 2 in G; No. 4 in D; No. 5 in C, Opus 35; Walter Schneiderhan* (violin), *Gustav Swoboda* (violin) and *Senta Benesch* (cello). Westminster LP disc WL50-42, \$5.95.

▲AT ONE TIME Boccherini and Haydn, who were contemporaries, were rated on a par in the top rank of composers. It is very interesting to note that the influence of German music writers and publicists had built up Haydn and practically eradicated Boccherini from the repertoire until the nation-leveling medium of LP made it possible for us to judge for ourselves. This same German school of music teaching, armed with the potent religion of lush Wagnerian chromaticism and reiteration, was entrusted to a very large

extent with the musical educations of our fathers and grandfathers in this country. It even penetrated the dominion of its arch-enemy, France (cf. Reyer, Fevrier, Chabrier, and even Debussy).

In view of the tremendous world-wide acceptance of Haydn's work it would be rather silly to demand that Boccherini be judged his equal today. I am merely trying to point out that the Italian composer has been un-

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justly neglected, mainly because he was playing for the wrong team. He of the "Celebrated Minuet," a popular but hardly great cello concert and other minor "celloisms" is capable of far more penetrating stuff. Try his *A major Symphony* (Westminster LP WL-50-2), a thoroughly delightful piece.

Boccherini wrote close to 400 major works including 20 symphonies, 124 string quintets and one opera. The trios under consideration are selected from a total of 48. They are strong and sinewy, more remindful of Beethoven than Haydn. They make for good listening. They should be fun to play, too.

The present performance spotlights the score, obscures the personalities of the musicians, who are competent, self-effacing and thoroughly experienced. No blemishes were noted in the recording, which, to the best of my knowledge, is a first. —A.W.P.

**BRAHMS:** *Quintet in F minor, Op. 34;* Clifford Curzon (piano) and the Budapest Quartet. Columbia LP disc ML 4336, \$4.85.

▲CLIFFORD CURZON is, in addition to being a fine pianist, that much rarer character, an outstanding musician. In music of the romantic era and especially on the present disc, Curzon's finely organized talents are adjusted to the optimum pitch of sensitivity without resorting to the customary distortion that has practically become traditional for the "rendering" of Victorian effusions and Italian opera arias.

This familiar Brahms piece — unquestionably one of that composer's most easily assimilated scores — finds the English pianist at his best. His colleagues uphold their end of the bargain without reproach, unless perhaps some unreconstructed purist might wrinkle a nostril at the over-all patina of sickness.

Record companies discovered this work early in their histories. Victor's tenth album set featured Harold Bauer and the Flonzaley Quartet in a performance that remained the recorded standard for many years, until Serkin and the Busch Quartet, with the aid of more advanced engineering technique (Victor set M-607), made its replacement. There has been a recent LP version by Clara Haskil and the Winterthur Quartet (Concert Hall LP disc CHC46) which, though honestly and tastefully set forth, can not equal the merit

of Curzon & Co.'s superior knowledge and ability. Excellent recording. —A.W.P.

**BACH:** *Sonata in A minor for Solo Flute;* **BEETHOVEN:** *Sonata in B flat for Flute and Piano;* **HONEGGER:** *Danse de la Chevre;* **ROUSSEL:** *Andante and Scherzo for Flute and Piano, Op. 51;* **DUKAS:** *La Plaine au loin du Faune;* **HINDEMITH:** *Sonata for Flute and Piano (1936); Jean-Pierre Rampal (flute) and Robert Veyron-Lacroix (piano).* Mercury LP disc MG 10067, \$4.85.

▲THERE is some very distinguished writing for flute here. Best piece of the set, not by a Frenchman as one might expect, is the Hindemith sonata, which so intrigued and pleased one Paris critic that he pronounced that "it seems almost French." What greater glory for an ex-patriate German viola player than this accolade from the flute center of the world!

The French pieces are excellent—especially the Dukas, written in memory of Debussy. It contains a gentle reminder of that master's most famous flute solo. The Beethoven sonata (1783-4) is cheerful, melodic and rather slight-weight, as one might expect from a teenage composer. On the other hand, this sample of Bach's instrumental technique is a tortuous exercise of great difficulty, undoubtedly of great value in the development of endurance, breath-control, stamina and rhythmic regularity. It has no place here.

Rampal favors a light airy tone which is best suited to the more modern works. He can be piercing, but not particularly weighty. He does not have the impeccable finesse of a Kincaid nor the communicative power of a Laurent as yet; nevertheless, he does very well for a fellow still on the best side of thirty, with every promise of ultimately reaching the top rank. He is most at home in the Hindemith, which receives a sparkling performance, least effective in the older works, where he is sometimes shrill, rushes the beat from time to time, and plays consistently at a loud *mezzoforte* level.

The accompanist is excellent, though he, too, has a tendency to rush rapid scale passages. The recording is adequate, except in the Roussel section, which was apparently dubbed from a gritty 78 rpm disc. Good program notes from the anonymous contributor.

—A.W.P.

**HAYDN:** *Quartet in E flat, Op. 64, No. 6,* and *Quartet in D major, Op. 76, No. 5;* **Vienna Konzerthaus Quartet.** Westminster LP disc WL 50-34, \$5.95.

▲THESE PLAYERS perform their Haydn in a rather leisurely manner but with unmistakable affection. While they have homogeneity of tonal color, they lack brightness of tone. There are two schools of thought on performing Haydn, one that is bold and assertive in which accents are often rough and the other more easy-going, rhythmically free and courteous, like the present ensemble. It is not for me to say which is preferable, for being able to adjust myself to different styles of performance in which I recognize musical intelligibility that does not place the artistry above the music, I can sit back and enjoy different types of music-making on different occasions.

The *E flat Quartet* is best known to me in the Pro Arte performance (Haydn Society series). I know of no other recording. It has a curious nickname, "The Railwayman" (especially on the Continent), which is said to derive from the way in which the close of the opening movement is approached. The whole work anticipates traits of Beethoven. The present annotator, Irving Kolodin, likens its style to the *Op. 18* quartets, but I concur with Cecil Gray who feels the quartet anticipates the style of the more mature Beethoven. The Minuet-Scherzo is one of Haydn's finest Ländlers.

The *D major Quartet* belongs to one of Haydn's most consummate groups (*Op. 76*). The slow movement is one of the composer's famous *Largos*, anticipating the spirit of Bruckner. Musical good humor prevails in the *presto* finale. The opening movement has a strong Italianate quality, being based on a typical Siciliano melody, which is varied by all sorts of technical devices. A strange but rather fascinating movement, not one of its composer's greatest opening sections, as the annotator points out, but most appealing, especially as it is performed here.

Westminster's recording is very live, clean and clear. —P.H.R.

▲**MARTINU:** *Three Madrigals;* **MOZART:** *Duo No. 2 in B flat, K.424;* **Joseph Fuchs** (violin) and **Lillian Fuchs** (viola). Decca LP disc DL-8510, \$4.85.

▲THIS RECORD would command attention if only because Joseph and Lillian Fuchs, two of the greatest string players of our time, had finally got a particle of their outstanding artistry preserved. That there is also a mature work by the distinguished Czech-born composer Bohuslav Martinu to be heard (not to mention a respectable *Duo* by Mozart with a cunning slow movement) makes this disc one of the most important releases of the new year.

The Martinu piece, written for the Fuchs, is not an imitation but rather an evocation of the madrigal of vocal lyricism with intricate texture. It is, to my way of thinking, a neo-Romantic work in that its expression rather than its structure seems to be its point of departure. Its chief expressive devices are long rhapsodic melodies, brisk rhythmic energy, and fanciful variety of coloration. The *Three Madrigals* are made well and sound well. They give off a radiant glow that is all too rare among chamber works today.

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their recent Mozart *Clarinet Concerto* issue make them a welcome figure on the musical scene. —C.J.L.

**SCHUBERT:** *Fantasia for Violin and Piano, Op. 159*; **Joseph Szigeti** (violin) and **Joseph Levine** (piano). **SZIGETI ENCORES:** *La Folia* (Corelli), *Clair de lune* (Debussy-Roclen), *Aubade from Le Roi d'Ys* (Lalo-Szigeti), *Valse Sentimentale* (Tchaikovsky-Grunes); **Joseph Szigeti** (violin) with **Andor Farkas**, **Andor Foldes**, and **Harry Kaufman** (pianists). Columbia LP disc ML-4338, \$4.85.

▲IN THE DAYS when Szigeti made the recording of *La Folia*, he had no superiors and few equals among living violinists. That superb performance, now reissued on this LP along with the well-turned trifles made about the same time, is many notches in quality above the new recording of the Schubert *Fantasia*.

This is not to say that there are not many outstanding moments of noble *cantilena*, elegant phraseology, and absorbing rhythmic tension in Szigeti's playing today. There are. But along with those unforgettable moments and the continual reminder that there is still a fascinating musical mind at work, we get a good many moments of wiry string tone, some slips in intonation, and a few passages that seem to reveal a deterioration in muscular coordination. The general impression I get during those occasional falls from grace is that Szigeti's fingers and bowing arm will not now always do what his mind tells them to.

Another thing that makes this performance less than perfect is Levine's circumscribed tonal palette. Neither on this record or in the concert room does he have the bright or brilliant sounds that certain passages in this music require. Despite his clean execution and his sound musicianship, Levine simply cannot be an equal partner (as he should be) in climactic passages, where Szigeti's tonal glow quite covers him.

The *Fantasia*, I must add, though not among the most memorable of Schubert's late works, nevertheless has its moments of genuine beauty. The *Andantino*, a set of variations on the song *Sei mir gegrüsst*, and the slow introduction into the final march are cases in point. —C.J.L.

**SCHUBERT:** *Quintet in A major, Op. 114* ("The Trout"); **Members of the Vienna Octet** — **W. Boskovsky** (violin), **G. Breitenbach** (viola), **N. Hubner** (cello), **J. Krump** (basso), **W. Panhoffer** (piano). London LP disc LLP 223, \$5.95.

▲THIS is a very fine performance and a beautifully sounding recording. The string playing is especially fine, but the piano playing while musically adept lacks luster and essential brightness. Schubert's piano in this joyous work is the dominant instrument, and it should gleam. There was an eagerness and a youthful ardor in the handling of the piano part by Paul Badura-Skoda in the recent performance of this work by the Vienna Concert House Quintet (Westminster disc 50-25) (See October 1950 issue), which made that performance a happy experience from beginning to end. Among the admirable qualities of this latest issue is a feeling for rhythmic nuance in the strings that accentuates Schubert's lyrical graciousness.

This is the fifth recording of this work issued within a year, four of which had admirable qualities. A preference may be difficult to make, but for my own part I think the choice lies between this and the recent Westminster version. The Budapest Quartet group is disappointing and the Stross-Rupp ensemble is outmoded by superior recording. The truncated Remington issue should be avoided. While I lean toward the Vienna Concert House Quintet, because of the vital spirit of its pianist and the more realistic projection of his instrument, the present performance incites my unqualified esteem. It is a case of a shoulder to shoulder test that precludes partisanship, but it does not preclude annoyance at the duplication. —P.H.R.

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## Keyboard

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**BACH:** *The Art of Fugue and Organ Chorale: Vor deinen Thron tret ich hiermit*; **Fritz Heitman**. Capitol 10" LP discs L-8121/2, \$3.85 each.

▲THE ART OF FUGUE, as most everyone knows, was Sebastian Bach's last will and

testament. It occupied him during the last 18 months of his life and, though left unfinished, represents a monumental compendium of fugal device.

Like the earlier *Musical Offering*, it is based on one theme throughout, and comprises a series of 14 fugues (not counting the two clavier version of the first pair of invertible fugues — *Contrapunctus 17a and 17b*) and four canons. Bach's death prevented the completion of the fourteenth fugue (only a huge fragment of this grand design was left us) and a final fifteenth which was never begun but was planned "to contain four themes and to be inverted note for note continuously in all four parts."

Because no specific instrumentation was indicated by Bach, *The Art of Fugue* has been presented in many different arrangements. It has been played by pianists, harpsichordists, organists, string quartets, chamber and orchestral ensembles. On records alone, we had before the present version four different arrangements: (1) an orchestral one by Hermann Diener; (2) a string quartet arrangement by Roy Harris and Herter Norton; (3) an organ arrangement played by E. Power Biggs; and (4) a chamber orchestra version by Roger Vuataz played by the Beromünster Radio Orchestra under Hermann Scherchen that was released by London on three LPs only last summer. But no matter how *The Art of Fugue* is arranged, it almost always gives the listener a sense of fulfillment. Its enormous variety of style and expression and, above all, its inexhaustible flow of melody makes most of us take it to our hearts. It is true that some would prefer to leave it alone. But like all of the accepted masterworks, it actively annoys almost no one.

In the present recording, only eight of the fugues and the four canons are included. Heitmann follows the latest and standard edition of *The Art of Fugue* by Wolfgang Graeser (Breitkopf and Härtel, Leipzig, 1927).

Fritz Heitmann, in an attempt to give his "recital" variety, has presented the following fugues in the order indicated: *Contrapunctus 1, 4, 13, 5, 12, 7, 14, 9, 16a and 16b, 11, 15, and 19*. This is followed by the touching organ chorale *Vor deinen Thron tret ich hiermit*, which Bach dictated from his deathbed.

There may be a number of musicians and laymen who may fairly contend that all of the

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fugues should have been played, and in order, so that the growth of the composition could be clearly observed. There may be those who may just as fairly contend that the fugues that Heitmann plays should have been kept in order (on an LP with separation bands one can pick and choose if one likes). There may even be those who will be displeased with the inclusion of an organ chorale in an *Art of Fugue* collection.

What I cannot imagine is anyone finding serious flaw in Heitmann's playing. For these ears, it is the dream organ playing of our time. Such thorough scholarship, profound understanding, imaginative registration, tonal sensibility, and rhythmic grandeurs have, in the first half of our century, met together in one organ player no more than once or twice in a generation.

It is a pleasure to report that Capitol's recording has done these great performances the justice they so deserved. For your reviewer Heitmann's is the best performance of *The Art of Fugue*, and this disc is the most handsome recorded souvenir of the 200th anniversary of Bach's passing. —C.J.L.

**FAURE:** *Impromptu No. 2, Op. 31; Barcarolle No. 2, Op. 41; Nocturne No. 6, Op. 63; Nocturne No. 13, Op. 119; Kathleen Long* (piano). London 10" LP disc LPS-246, \$4.85.

▲NONE OF THESE PIECES is especially well known, although the *Second Impromptu* occasionally gets a performance in concert. They should be heard more often. Like all of Fauré's music, they have elegance and sensitivity and some very interesting pianistic devices. They are much more difficult than they sound, as a glance at the music will confirm. It takes a very flexible pianist to cope with them — a pianist with a big technique and a really refined, nuanced touch.

Miss Long has the technique, all right. Her tone and touch are other questions. As in her performance of a previous London disc of Fauré's piano music, there is plenty of discipline and conscientiousness. There is something less, however, in the way of identification with the music. Her phrasing could be more fluid, for one thing; and there is a faintly pedantic touch to the proceedings. Still the playing is in essence faithful; and since the music is so well worth having, one must recommend this disc. Has Miss Long em-

barked on an integral recording of Fauré's piano music?

A word about the last *Nocturne*, Op. 119. It contains some remarkable harmonic content and is one of the supreme examples of resignation in music. Fauré wrote it two years before his death — he was almost eighty years old then — and he put into it the emotional experience of a lifetime. Did the melodies of his earlier *Pelleas and Melisande* come back to haunt him? Melodic scraps of that work are present, but in a completely transfigured form. —H.C.S.

**MOZART:** *Sonata in B Flat, K.333; Amparo Iturbi* (piano). RCA Victor set WDM-1471, 2 45-rpm discs, \$2.20.

▲IT IS DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE that this charming work, so often played in our concert halls, has never been recorded until now. But that is what my reference books tell me.

For that reason, it is a pity that Amparo Iturbi's performance is no better than it is. Although her execution is clean and her pedal work admirably restrained, her tone is too percussive; and her disregard of many of the dynamic markings in the first and second movements does not allow the work to make its full effect on the listener. Miss Iturbi's rhythm could also have more life in the second movement.

RCA Victor's engineers don't help much either. I do not share their seeming fondness for the shallow, brittle tone that they get by putting the microphone so close to the piano. I should add that there is serious distortion on the first half-inch of side 4 in my set.

—C.J.L.

## Voice

**BACH:** *Cantata No. 131 — Aus der Tiefe; William Hess* (tenor), **Paul Matthen** (basso), **The Robert Shaw Chorale** and **RCA Victor Orchestra** conducted by **Robert Shaw**. *Cantata No. 140 — Wachet auf, ruft uns die Stimme; S. Freil* (soprano), **R. Russell** (tenor), **Paul Matthen** (basso); **The Robert Shaw Chorale** and **RCA Victor Orchestra** conducted by **Robert Shaw**. Victor LP disc LM 1100, \$5.72.



▲IT IS A GOOD THING to see so many of the cantatas coming complete (in duration they seem to accommodate themselves happily to LP) instead of by the single aria: if this vast treasure-house is to be inventoried it is none too soon to begin the proceedings. No. 131 is a handsome work including some of that restless choral writing possible only to a first-rate contrapuntalist, and a couple of those solos he loved to write with a chorale tune serving as counter-melody. Shaw has given the work of his very best; vocal and instrumental musicians are all in top form. The two vocal soloists are Bachians of long standing. The engineers have achieved an unusual sense of presence as well as of spaciousness.

*Cantata No. 140*, of course, has been with us for a couple of years in the 78 rpm version. One of the most immediately striking of the cantatas (it contains the choral counterpart of the chorale prelude by the same title) it is only less well done than its companion. Of the three soloists, however, only Paul Matthen shows to any particular advantage, and the recording, while by no means unsatisfactory, does not have the wonderful realism of *Aus der Tiefe*. It would be nice in recordings such as these to have the movements separated by means of spirals. —P.L.M.

**FAURE:** *Tristesse*, Op. 6, No. 2; *Au bord de l'eau*, Op. 8, No. 1; *Après un reve*, Op. 7, No. 1; *Clair de lune*, Op. 43, No. 3; *Arpège*, Op. 76, No. 2; *En sourdine*, Op. 58, No. 2; *L'horizon chimérique*, Op. 118; **SCHUBERT:** *Gesänge des Harfners*, Op. 12, No. 1; *Fischerweise*, Op. 96, No. 4; *Der Wanderer*, Op. 4, No. 1; *Der Doppelgänger* (*Schwanengesang*, No. 13); *Heidenröslein*, Op. 3, No. 3; *Der Erlkönig*, Op. 1; **Gerard Souzay** (baritone); **Jacqueline Bonneau** (piano). London LP disc, LLP 245 \$5.95.

▲BY NOW MR. SOUZAY'S PROWESS in the field of French song is common knowledge, and his Fauré recital on the first side of this disc will be more than welcome. We have had several of the songs from him before, but these versions seem to be new, as the label names a different pianist. Mr. Souzay, as his management has not been averse to letting us know, is a pupil of Pierre Bernac, and in some ways he carries on the traditions of his master. His voice, however, is a far finer instrument than Bernac ever had; consequent-

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ly he is able to do more straight legitimate singing and to rely less on the art of the *disseur*. These Fauré songs benefit by a beautiful *legato*, appealing tone and fine musical poise. *Au bord de l'eau* is quite as lovely as it was on the Ninon Vallin disc that won her a *grand prix* some years ago (Pathé PAT 93081) and the less familiar *Arpège* is reason enough for buying the record. And never has *Clair de lune* seemed more perfect, what with the sheer musicality of the vocal line, the intimacy and the intense and perfectly controlled *vibrato*.

The Schubert songs are in a somewhat different case. The first of the three *Gesänge des Harfners* (the songs of the Harper in Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister*), more specifically *Wer sich der Einsamkeit ergibt* has not come my way on records before, and fortunately it is the best of the group. As the program progresses we are more and more conscious of the fact that the singer is not German. *Fischerweise* is charming enough, but *Der Doppelgänger* and *Der Wanderer* want a more impressive tone and a broader conception. *Heidenröslein* finds Souzay, like most men, quite out of his element, and of *Der Erlkönig* it might be best to say it is an interesting try. In this last song the voice overwhelms the piano; otherwise the balance with the piano is good. The disc is not free of surface noise. —P.L.M.

**MOZART:** *Il Re Pastore* — *Dein bin ich*;

**SCHUBERT:** *Suleika, I & II*; *Der Hirt auf dem Felsen*, Op. 129; Erna Berger (soprano) and George Schick (piano) with Oscar Shumsky (violin) and David Oppenheim (clarinet). RCA Victor WDM 1423, two 45-rpm discs, \$3.35. (Also 78 rpms)

▲FOR HER FIRST SOLO FLIGHT in the American studios Miss Berger has provided a "must" for every *lieder* collection by the simple device of including the two *Suleika* of Schubert: the first of these has unaccountably never appeared before, while the second has been out of the catalogues since the dropping of the old Gerhardt (HMV DB 1544 — incidentally one of the best discs by that superb artist). Conveniently packaged with this are the first acceptable *Hirt auf dem Felsen* issued domestically since Schumann's went the way (Victor 14815) and the aria that keeps the name of *Il Re Pastore* alive, in which Lily Pons (Columbia 71696D) furnishes the only American competition. Miss Berger, as is well known, can claim unusual technical

proficiency, a limpid quality of tone and better than ordinary musicianship and taste. That she is a truly warm singer no one would assert, and to the ears of this reviewer (who knows he is in the minority) she does not make a direct human appeal. In these recordings there is some fluttering and some sharp singing as well as some vocalism of a definitely superior order. The Mozart aria, like Miss Pons' none-too-happy effort, runs to two sides, from which I conclude (without having had time to check with the score) that it is complete; but it is sung in German translation and to piano accompaniment. In *Der Hirt auf dem Felsen* the final *allegretto* section shows the singer to the best advantage, though in this song the voice somewhat overbalances the piano. —P.L.M.

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**OPERATIC ARIAS:** Lucia — *Tombe degli avi miei* (Donizetti) (2 sides); *L'Elisir d'amore* — *Quanto è bella* (Donizetti); *La Tosca* — *Recondita armonia* and *E lucevan le stelle* (Puccini); *Marta* — *M'appari tutt'amor* (Flotow); Ferruccio Tagliavini (tenor) with RCA Victor Orchestra conducted by Jean Paul Morel. RCA Victor set WDM-1432, four 45-rpm discs, \$4.30.

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**DONIZETTI:** *L'Elisir d'amore* — *Una furtiva lagrima*, and CILEA: *L'Arlésiana* — *Lamento di Federico*; Jussi Bjöerling with Orchestra conducted by Nils Grevilius. RCA Victor 45-rpm disc 49-3086, 95c.

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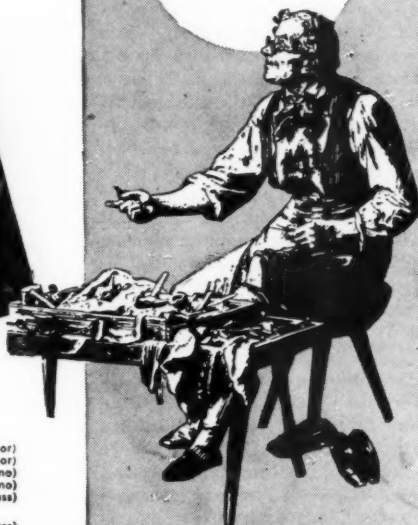
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▲THIS melange of operatic excerpts offers some good and bad singing. In no case does the performance retard memories of existent recordings of former days though the reproduction of these are topnotch examples of engineering skill of our time. Miss Albanese makes much of the texts of her arias, projects some thrilling high tones, but at no time observes the *pianissimo* markings of the composers. Also, an occasional excessive vibrato causes some fluttery singing in her middle range, and her interjection of sobs and coughs are not in good taste. . . Mr. Tagliavini is far better recorded than his first Victor set, and he sings with more restraint. His high tones are not strident nor spread. There is true beauty of tone in his *pianissimo* singing and one can be grateful that he avoids excesses, though his jerky rhythm in *Martha* disturbs an otherwise smooth rendition. The operatic duets are mostly taken from previous issues. Only the *Love Duel* from *I Pagliacci* is new. It is well sung by Albanese and Merrill. The *Tosca* duet is now overshadowed by the recent Welitch-Tucker version; Vinay remains wooden in comparison with Tucker. Albanese is at her best in the *Butterfly* music, but one wearies of Melton's effort to steal the show at the end. The *Love Duel* from Beecham's unsurpassed performance of *Faust* reminds us that an LP release of this opera is long overdue. It is to be hoped that Victor will not neglect such an issue now that Beecham is no longer connected with the company. . . Bjoerling sings the better part of his arias with admirable artistic restraint, but his endings are too forced and too obviously theatrical. —J.N.

**STRAUSS, Johann:** *Die Fledermaus* (complete); **Julius Patzak** (Eisenstein); **Hilde Gueden** (Rosalinde); **Anton Dermota** (Alfred); **Alfred Poell** (Dr. Faulke); **Kurt Preger** (Frank); **Wilma Lipp** (Adele); **Sieglinde Wagner** (Orlovsky); **August Jaresch** (Dr. Blind); **Chorus of the Vienna State Opera**, the **Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra** conducted by **Clemens Krauss**. London set LLP 281-282, \$11.90.

**STRAUSS, Johann:** *Die Fledermaus* (abridged); **James Melton** (Eisenstein); **Regina Resnik** (Rosalinda); **Jan Peerce** (Alfred); **Robert Merrill** (Dr. Falke); **Hugh Thompson** (Frank); **Patrice Munsel** (Adele); **Rise Stevens** (Orlovsky);

**Johnny Silver** (Dr. Blind); **Robert Shaw Chorale**, **RCA Victor Orchestra** conducted by **Fritz Reiner**. Victor LP disc LM 1114, \$5.45. (Also set WDM-1457, 7 45-rpm discs, \$6.20.).

▲YET ANOTHER VERSION of Strauss' opera in three-quarter time will be issued by Columbia, using the English text by Howard Dietz which was written especially for the current Metropolitan production. The latter recording will have Ormandy as conductor and Ljuba Welitch as Rosalinde.

*Die Fledermaus* is so essentially Viennese that its production in an English translation more often than not becomes alien to the character and mood of story and music. The Metropolitan production was, in my estimation, more appealing to the eye than the ear. Take it from one who attended the opening performance, the production aimed to go Broadway one better and in so doing failed to substantiate the full charm of the Viennese operetta type of production. That full charm is encountered in the recorded performance by London. Hilde Gueden is a sheer delight as Rosalinde, and Wilma Lipp's is a warmer-toned and more expressive portrayal of Adele than Patrice Munsel's. The latter was better on the stage than in the recording. Both the Viennese tenors, Patzak and Dermota, are better cast than Melton and Peerce, and Poell's Dr. Falke has more personality than Merrill's. Only Miss Stevens' Orlovsky seems better cast in the recording; Sieglinde Wagner is too feminine for belief in her characterization.

London provides a libretto which will serve those unfamiliar with the German language. However, it should be noted, some of the translation is farfetched and in at least one case — Orlovsky's aria — completely ridiculous. There is a better translation available in a libretto put out by Ditson.

As to orchestral honors, neither Reiner nor Krauss quite achieve the sparkle and lift of Ormandy's direction in the opera house. Of the two, Krauss is more natural and more freely lyrical. Reiner tends to drag and rush his tempi on occasion, and his whipping up of climaxes sometimes proves embarrassing to the singers.

The recording honors belong to London. Theirs is a more natural theater sound; Victor's production is clear but almost too brilliantly resonant. The abridgement of the

Victor issue proves disrupting to both the story and musical continuity, and though the English text is fairly well projected the lack of a libretto with the record leaves something to be desired. While the Viennese production omits a lot of dialogue, musically it is complete, and for this reason it is better balanced. As Columbia promises a complete recording in the translation used by the Metropolitan, those who prefer the English language might do well to await its release for comparison.

—J.N.

**WAGNER:** *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (Act 2 complete); **Hilde Gueden** (Eva), **Gunther Treptow** (Walther von Stolzing), **Else Schurhoff** (Magdalene), **Anton Dermota** (David). The Mastersingers are **Paul Schoeffler** (Hans Sachs), **Otto Edelmann** (Veit Pagner), **Karl Dönch** (Sixtus Beckmesser); and **Hugo Meyer-Welfing**, **Wilhelm Felden**, **Alfred Poell**, **Erich Majkut**, **William Wernick**, **Hermann Gallos**, **Ljubomir Pantschew**, and **Harald Pröglhöf** (who also sings *Ein Nachtwächter*). **Chorus of the Vienna State Opera** and **The Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra** conducted by **Hans Knappertsbusch**. London LP discs LLP-284/5, \$11.90.

▲MUSIC CRITICS seldom get an operatic performance these days that gives them a chance to toss their hats over the moon. But let it be said from the outset that here is one.

*Die Meistersinger*, perhaps Wagner's greatest opera and assuredly one of the three or four most significant comedies ever produced for the lyric stage, has (except for the RCA Victor version of the third act — DM-537/8) long been neglected by recording companies. The appearance of these two superbly recorded discs and the announcement that complete performances of the first and third acts by the same executants will be forthcoming is cause for rejoicing.

Paul Schoeffler and Hilde Gueden are clearly the stars of this performance, though none of the other singing artists listed above are far behind them in brilliance. Such perfect vocalism, such dramatic style, such musicianship is seldom encountered simultaneously in any opera house today.

Now every baritone who attempts Sachs these days is ever matched against Friedrich Schorr, the standard for opera-goers during

the twenties and thirties. Schoeffler's tone may not be as warm and caressing as Schorr's, but there is plenty of it with a variety of expressive coloration that is up to and perhaps a trifle ahead of the older artist. Schoeffler's Sachs is a real man of great physical and moral strength, and his passions are those of a cobbler whose soul is banked by poetic fires. But all the same, he is a cobbler, and that's hard work that's rough on the hands. Schorr, it seemed to me, never quite completely sustained the impression that Sachs was *immer Schuster*. Michael Bohnen, a great Sachs of the twenties, did; and Paul Schoeffler certainly does.

I must go back to Elisabeth Rethberg to recall an Eva to challenge Hilde Gueden. Here is more than just the sweet young thing that so many sopranos make of Eva. Here is woman — Shaw's woman, Wagner's too (in *Meistersinger* anyway), as well as da Ponte's in *Così Fan Tutte* and Gilbert's in a half-dozen operettas. A woman of infinite practicality and ruthlessness inextricably mixed with irresistible sympathy and the velvet touch. An excellent example of Miss Gueden's ability to show every facet of Eva's character is powerfully demonstrated in her duet with Sachs, *Gul'n Abend Meister! Noch so fleissig?*

To carry this note of praise further, I must say that I had not expected such carefully detailed and spirited work from Hans Knappertsbusch. His history in the concert hall

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has, in my experience, been hardly luminous. Perhaps, after all, he is a man of the theatre. These records certainly document that impression. His pacing is just, his balancing a model, and the Vienna Philharmonic has never played better. Indeed, everything is sweet and harmonious. Even the chorus says "thank you" for the painstaking rehearsals it must have had for this history-making recording. —C.J.L.

## Record Miscellany

**MOZART:** *Symphony No. 25 in G minor, K.183; Symphony No. 36 in C major, K.425 ("Linz"); Pro Musica Orchestra* conducted by **Otto Klemperer**. Vox LP disc PL 6280, \$5.95.

**MOZART:** *Concerto No. 25 in C major, K.503; Gaby Casadesus* (piano) with **Lamoureux Orchestra** conducted by **Eugène Bigot**. Vox LP disc PL 6520, \$5.95.

**MOZART:** *Concerto No. 20 in D minor, K.466; Rondo, K.485 and Minuet, K.355; Lili Kraus* (piano) with **Pro Musica Orchestra** conducted by **Enrique Jorda**. Vox LP disc PL 6290, \$5.95.

**MOZART:** *Concerto No. 18 in B flat major, K.456; Lili Kraus* (piano) with **London Philharmonic Orchestra** conducted by **Walter Goehr**; **MOZART:** *Sonata in C major, K.404; Lili Kraus* (piano) and **Szymon Goldberg** (violin); and **SCHUBERT:** *Ländler, Op. 18; Lili Kraus*. Decca LP disc DL 8505, \$5.95.

**MOZART:** *Divertimento in E flat, K.563; Pasquier Trio*. Vox LP disc DL 6030, \$5.95.

▲I DO NOT THINK that Klemperer has control over every contingency like Koussevitzky in the "Linz" but Klemperer has more personal feeling. And despite some taut playing and tonal harshness in the reproduction, his little *G minor* has as direct and satisfying an approach as is to be found on records. More glimmer in the string tone would have helped matters.

Mozart's *C major Concerto, K.503* is regarded as a disappointment by many, but I

find its brilliant and majestic qualities worthy of repeated attention. Arthur Hitchens calls it Mozart's "Emperor" concerto, and says "had its second and third movements been as fine as its first, the whole work would have been a greater example of Mozart as a concertist than the so-called "Emperor" concerto is of Beethoven." Gaby Casadesus performs this difficult work very easily and assuredly; I like her performance better than Kathleen Long's. Technically, the reproduction is most satisfactory.

Miss Krauss is curiously uneven and erratic in her interpretation of the great *D minor*, as though its agitated passion evoked uncertain reactions in her. Yet, there is much to admire in this proficient pianist's artistry. Jorda is a competent conductor with a feeling for coloration. Good recording.

Decca has repressed Miss Kraus' pre-war performance of the *B flat Concerto*, and what a wonderful job of engineering has been accomplished. The piano tone is genuinely beautiful and the overall quality, despite limited frequency range, most satisfying. This concerto with its almost roguish elation in the corner movements and gentle pathos and poetic expressiveness in the slow section is ever a pleasure. Miss Kraus' unerring musicianship in this is in the best Mozart tradition. Coupled with this work is the unfinished *Sonata in C*, which was found on the last face of the original 78 issue of English Parlophone. Kraus and Goldberg in the days before the war were an unrivalled team in their performances of the Mozart sonatas. The Schubert *Ländler* are charmingly played by Miss Kraus, but they are out of their element here.

The *E flat Divertimento*, the only string trio that Mozart wrote, is one of his greatest chamber works, on a plane with his finest string quartets. The Pasquier brothers performed this work beautifully for Pathé before the war, and now they have re-played it for Vox-Polydor under far better recording conditions. I find their new performance infinitely more subtle and penetrating than the rendition by Heifetz, Primrose and Feuerman; the Pasquiers alone gave the impression of having lived intimately with the music for a long time.

—P.H.R.

**HAYDN:** *Concerto in C major; Szymon Goldberg* (violin) with the **Philharmonic**

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**Orchestra** conducted by **Walter Susskind**, **HANDEL: Sonata No. 4 in D major; Szymon Goldberg with Gerald Moore** (piano). Decca LP disc DL 8504, \$5.95.

**HAYDN: Three Trios — No. 2 in F sharp minor, No. 3 in C major, No. 5 in E flat major; Lili Kraus** (piano), **Szymon Goldberg** (violin), **Anthony Pini** (cello). Decca LP set DX 104, 2 discs, \$11.90.

▲THESE ARE excellent re-recordings of English Parlophone pre-war issues. Goldberg's performances of the Haydn concerto and the Handel sonata are unsurpassed for their musical sensitivity, wonderful detail of line and dynamics, though the orchestra is too large for the concerto. The Haydn trios are consummately played, and one only wishes that this fine group had made more of these diverting works.

#### MOZART ARIAS and FRENCH SONGS:

**Bidu Sayao** (soprano) with **Orchestras**, conducted by **Paul Breisach, Erich Leinsdorf, and Pietro Cimara**. Columbia 10" LP disc ML 2152, \$3.85.

▲IF I RECALL rightly, two of the Mozart arias — *Zerlina's Balli, balli and Vedrai, carino* were issued on Columbia 78 rpm discs. To these Miss Sayao adds the Countess' aria *Porgi amor* and *Susanna's Deh vieni from Figaro*, both of which are well sung, though the former is not suited to her girlish voice. The French group contains the singer's previously issued *Voyons, Manon* and, a group of new recordings — *Hahn's Si mer vers, Duparc's Chanson triste* and the *Recitative and Aria of Lia* from Debussy's early cantata, *L'enfant prodigue*. Perhaps to keep the recital consistent, Miss Sayao chose orchestral accompaniments for the songs, but these are ill served by them. The Brazilian-born soprano sings with intelligence and charm, but she is more suited to the part of Manon than Lia. Needless to say, Columbia has provided fine recording.

**SONGS OF RACHMANINOFF; SERES-TAS: (Villa-Lobos); THREE SONGS OF CHOPIN; Jennie Tourel** (mezzo-soprano). Columbia LP disc ML-4357, \$4.85.

▲THESE ARE all re-issues and should prove most welcome on LP, for Miss Tourel is a gifted artist who conveys the mood of almost everything she essays.

**THE CHRISTMAS MUSIC BOX: Twenty Selections** recorded from the authentic original Music Box Collection of George and Madeleine Brown of Chatham, N. J. Sounds of our Times 10" LP disc. \$3.85.

▲THEY didn't talk about high frequencies in the old days when they played the old music boxes, but some of them certainly had the high tones. There's only one way to describe the sounds from this record — *fabulous*. If we had known about the record earlier (it arrived on the 20th of December) we would have suggested it as a Christmas must. There are 20 tunes played on six different music boxes. These range from *Jingle Bells* and *Adeste Fideles* to *Silent Night*, a hymn or two, operatic airs, and some old timers like Necke's *Nightingale Song* and Metra's *Bells of Cornville* which used to be popular in grand-ma's day.

—J.N.

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## The Great Vivaldi

(Continued from page 160)

evoke a hitherto undreamed-of expressiveness from the instrument, *c. f.* Bach's *Unaccompanied Violin Sonatas*. In the next century, the same was true of such a virtuoso as Paganini. Burney did not recognize Vivaldi's stature when he labeled his *Stravaganze* as "showpieces." In point of fact, Vivaldi's concertos mark the half-way point of development between the concerto grosso of the Baroque and the concerto of the Romantic era.

The title *Il cimento dell' armonia e dell' invenzione* is proof that Vivaldi wrote in the scientific spirit mentioned before. It is wrong to translate "cimento" as "struggle," "conflict," or "fusion" — which qualities exist in their true meaning in none of Vivaldi's works. These are terms more fitly applicable to Beethoven or to the music of those that followed him. *Cimento* in this case means *Essay* in its original meaning of "process of trying, testing, or experimenting." The complete title, therefore, should not be *The Struggle between Harmony and Invention*, but rather *An Essay on Harmony and Invention*. *Harmony* in this connection refers to music given to the *tutti*, and *invention* to the improvisational music written for the single violin.

In *Opus 8*, Vivaldi deviates sharply from the concerto grosso style in that the characteristic shifting of weight from the sonority of the whole orchestra to that of the small group of solo instruments and *vice versa* is superseded by a rondo-like form wherein tutti passages, all more or less similar, are interlarded with changing improvisational passages for the solo violin. The latter seem to have no relation to the thematic material played before or after; they are free improvisations over a figured bass, similar to and often identical with the figured bass in tutti passages. These virtuoso sections are the result of the searching efforts of the composer to widen the capabilities of the violin. Each is a miniature etude. Put side by side, they add up to a "school of dexterity" for the violin.

Each concerto is made up of three movements, a slow movement flanked by two that are fast and spirited. The middle movements are not in concerto grosso style. They consist of song-like melodies played by the violin

to the accompaniment of the orchestra and show the influence of the operatic aria with which Vivaldi, as the composer of 38 operas, was thoroughly conversant.

Kaufman's performance gives evidence that he has steeped himself in the music of Vivaldi. His clever fingers never belie his keen musical perceptions. His devoted efforts to promote the cause of worthwhile music have borne excellent fruit here. —Bernard Lebow

## In the Popular Vain

by Enzo Archetti

During the past decade, Sammy Kaye's *Sunday Serenade*, featuring popular songs and poetry for relaxation, has been one of the most favored of Sunday radio programs. For his initial Columbia album *Sammy Kaye's Sunday Serenade* (Columbia CL-6155 or C-219, 4-10" discs) Kaye records for the first time the genial musical moods of the *Sunday Serenade* in eight song favorites.

Heard in this group of songs from the early Thirties are *Music, Maestro, Please*, currently enjoying a revival of favor; *Honey*; *As Time Goes By*; *No Greater Love*; *Just A Gogolo*; *You've Got Me Crying Again*; and *You Oughta Be In Pictures*. Vocal choruses are provided by Tony Alamo and Judy Johnson, with the Kaydets joining in on *You've Got Me Crying Again*. The sole instrumental selection — the most effective number in the collection — is Gordon Jenkin's *Blue Prelude*.

This 1950 volume (the LP envelope is rather strangely marked "1951 Edition") is the first of an annual series of *Sunday Serenade* albums which will feature vocal and instrumental selections in the "Swing and Sway" style.

The film *Destination Moon* is an unusual and scientifically intriguing picture whose effectiveness is greatly enhanced by an imaginative musical score by Leith Stevens. It has been recored on Columbia CL-6151, presumably by a symphony-size orchestra under Stevens' direction, although the LP jacket fails to say so. It may even have been taken from the film's sound track. If it has, it has been skillfully edited and the sound quality has been preserved. The score is divided into

three parts: *Earth, In Outer Space*, and *On the Surface of the Moon*, each sub-divided into episodes with titles tying them to scenes in the picture. It isn't necessary to have seen the picture to enjoy this dramatic, colorful and imaginative music. The titles of the parts provide sufficient clues to music's intention.

Two of the latest recorded Hymn collection are *Songs of Faith* (Capitol H-9014), Jo Stafford and the Ravenscroft Quartet with accompaniment by Paul Weston; and *Hymns* (Columbia CL-6154), The Mariners with organ accompaniment. These two collections comprising some of the best-loved hymns, duplicate themselves in only two instances. Both discs are well sung, the Mariners' more brightly and cheerfully, while Jo Stafford's seems a little too solemn, even for hymns. Technically, they are very life-like. Incidentally, this is probably Jo's last recording for Capitol because now she is an exclusive Columbia artist.

In the same vein we have *Our Lady of Fatima* and Nevin's *The Rosary* sung by The Mariners, with orchestra under the direction of Archie Bleyer (Columbia 39042); and *David's Psalm* and *The Everlasting Arms* by Doris Day with chorus and orchestra (Columbia 39023).

*Sing and Dance With Frank Sinatra* (Columbia CL-6143) turns out to be a pretty arid stretch of music making. The orchestra accompanying him is not the usual with Axel Stordahl, but one directed by George Siravo. There hangs a tale — maybe! Better are two singles: *Nevertheless* and *I Guess I'll Have To Dream the Rest* (Columbia 39044); and *Remember Me In Your Dreams* and *Let It Snow!* (Columbia 39069). Axel Stordahl accompanies. Billy Butterfield plays a swell trumpet chorus in *Nevertheless*.

Sweet, soft, and sentimental — that's Jo Stafford and Gordon MacRae in *Sunday Evening Songs* (Capitol H-247). The songs are the kind that were once popular in every parlor get-together and still are whenever the mood is mellow and nostalgic. Included are *Now the Day Is Over*; *In the Gloaming*; *Juanita*; *Long, Long Ago*; etc. Paul Weston supplies an appropriate, subdued accompaniment. Recording is excellent.

Some good dance discs are *Chi Bim Bam Bam* and *Chiquita Bacana*, two sambas by Xavier Cugat and his orchestra (Columbia

39037); *The Polkarina* and *The Petite Waltz* by Frankie Yankovic and His Yanks (Columbia 39046); and *Mucho Mambo* by Perez Prado and his orchestra (Victor WP-302, 3-45's).

The ubiquitous *The Thing* is given a hilarious recording by Arthur Godfrey on Columbia 39068, assisted by Archie Bleyer and his orchestra.

Three Broadway hits get immediate and ample representation on records. Irving Berlin's *Call Me Madam* gets a handsome release from Victor which boasts the original cast and company except for Dinah Shore replacing Ethel Merman, who is under contract to Decca. Five 45's in Victor's new green label series (WOC-1) cover practically the entire score including the overture. The result is grand and so is the recording. Singly, from the same show, there is *Once Upon A Time Today* and *Something To Dance About* (Hugo Winterhalter's Orchestra and Chorus, Victor 47-3951); *It's A Lovely Day Today* and *You're Just In Love* (Perry Como, with the Fontane Sisters and Mitchell Ayres and his orchestra, Victor 47-3945); and *It's A Lovely Day Today* (Doris Day with chorus and orchestra under George Siravo, Columbia 39055).

Frank Loesser's fine score for the musical fable of Broadway, *Gys and Dolls*, is done with relish by Audrey Marsh, Ray Charles, Donald Richards, Morey Amsterdam, the Guild Choristers, and Al Goodman and his orchestra (Victor WK-27, 4-45's). No claim is made to completeness but all the important numbers are there, better than well-sung, and excellently recorded. Singles include *If I Were A Bell* and *I've Never Been In Love Before* sung with pep by Doris Day (Columbia 39031); *I'll Know* by Fran Warren (Victor 47-3956); and *I've Never Been In Love Before* by Ralph Flanagan and his orchestra with Harry Prince as vocalist (Victor 47-3949).

Though Cole Porter's *Out of the World* didn't receive the raves that were expected, it nevertheless contains some first class Porter music. No "complete recording" has come this way yet but the number of singles cover the field adequately. Doris Day does *From This Moment On* and *I Am Loved* (Columbia 39057); and *Nobody's Chasing Me* on Columbia 39056. The orchestras of Frank Comstock accompanies the first and George Siravo, the second. Jo Stafford with Paul Weston and his

orchestra do *Use Your Imagination* and *Where Oh Where* on Columbia 39049; and *You Don't Remind Me* on Columbia 39056. *Use Your Imagination* and *I Am Lured* are also sung by Gordon MacRae on Capitol 1289; Frank DeVol and his orchestra accompany. Vaughn Monroe does the same pair in his heavy-voiced way which is redeemed only by some really good orchestral accompaniment (Victor 47-3977). Dinah Shore does very well indeed with *Nobody's Chasing Me* with Henri René's seconding (Victor 47-3978).

One of the most pleasant melodies to come our way in months is *Autumn Leaves*. Of French origin, *Les feuilles mortes* of Jacques Prevert was given a set of English lyrics by Johnny Mercer and it's now headed for the top of the hit parade. Ray Anthony made the song his own and turned out a splendid record of it (Capitol 1280) assisted by Ronnie Deauville and The Skyliners. Jo Stafford, too, has a fine version (Capitol 1248). It may be hard to make a choice, especially as both flipovers are also good. Anthony has *Mr. Anthony's Boogie*, an all-instrumental powerhouse. Jo has Vernon Duke's atmospheric *Autumn In New York*. The choice is less difficult when it comes to Buddy Morrow's (Victor 47-3946). Paradoxically, Tommy Mercer carries the lyrics.

The Three Suns do some pretty strange things with six popular concert pieces under the guise of arrangements (*Pop Concert Favorites*, Victor WP-292, 3-45's). Gade's *Jalousie*, Anderson's *Fiddle Faddle*, Lecuona's *Malaguena*, De Falla's *Ritual Fire Dance*, Ketelby's *In A Persian Market*, and Dinicu's *Hora Staccato* get the works — with surprising results. A bit too unusual for steady company, though. *It Is No Secret* and *To Think You're Chosen Me* on Victor 47-3976 are more in their usual vein. How tame it sounds after the album! Technically, the recordings are good throughout.

Victor follows its excellent *H.M.S. Pinafore* with *The Mikado* (WK-23, 5-45's) done by the same artists — Jimmy Carroll, Audrey Marsh, John Percival, Sally Sweetland, Martha Wright, Earl Wrightson, the Guild Choristers, and Al Goodman and his orchestra. All the important musical numbers are in their proper place, but again, what this album lacks, is the D'Oyle Carte style. The recording is nicely balanced and very lifelike.

Columbia has launched a most laudable

series of LP records called *Piano Moods* with which it intends to explore the major modern piano styles in jazz and popular music, featuring the country's leading musicians. Utilizing the highly successful format of the *LP Dance Date* series of uninterrupted dance band performances, each of the *Piano Moods* discs contains two continuous 15-minute medleys of standard and unusual popular compositions, as well as classic jazz pieces, performed without interruption. In effect, they are anthologies of styles and tunes.

Heading this series is Erroll Garner (CL-6139), one of the most popular and most discussed of the younger pianists. He has two distinct styles, both melodic, but one slow, meandering, romantic; the other, quicker and bouncier. In both styles, the Garner trademark — a tantalizing delayed beat in the right hand — is heard. His ability to play so well in two styles has made him a favorite with two separate schools of jazz lovers.

Ralph Sutton, a disciple of Fats Waller and Joe Sullivan, follows on CL-6140 with medleys displaying an impressive technique and a fertile imagination. His playing is, for the most part, airy and almost casual.

Less interesting are Walter Gross (of Walter Gross Trio fame) on CL-6141 and Dardanella, the only woman pianist in the series so far, on CL-6142. Both are of the cocktail bar type.

With Jess Stacy (CL-6147), Joe Bushkin (CL-6152), and Teddy Wilson (CL-6153), Columbia returns to more solid jazz fare. All are great jazz pianists. All cut their eye-teeth in the great '30's when hot jazz grew of age and all left their mark in the history of the period. These records show that time has changed them not at all. They are still great jazz pianists.

The piano tone has been captured most realistically in all the discs. Columbia deserves a medal for thinking of issuing such a series and too for having done so well by it technically. It shouldn't stop now. The field is still a large one.

Though not issued in the same series, *Keyboard Capers* by Herman Chittison, the CBS Crime Photographer's Blue Note Pianist (CL-6134), could be classed among the modern popular pianists. Not of the same calibre as the others, he nevertheless has a fanciful imagination and technique, and an individual way with popular pieces.



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